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[A MOMENT OF PERIL.]

HE LOVES ME: HE LOVES ME NOT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Maurice Durant," "Fickle Fortune," "The Gipsy Peer," etc., etc.

CHAPTER VII.

None but the brave deserve the fair. Dryden.

"WELL, Valeria, what do you think of our friends?" asked Madame Leclaire, as the two ladies were seated in their little boudoir on their return from Woodley Street, Cavendish Square.

"I have thought very little of them," said Valeria. "They were very kind, and the evening was an amusing one. It is true I have seen but little of society, and am scarcely qualified to pronounce an opinion; but do you know much of the Armitages?"

"Not very much," replied Madame Leclaire. "I am afraid by the question that you do not like them. I knew Mr. Armitage; he was a merchant, and died suddenly. Some persons said that he left no money behind him and a great many debts, but it could not have been true, you see. Mrs. Armitage and Selina went abroad directly after Mr. Armitage's death. Selina is a nice, clever girl; I hope you like her."

"I have seen so little of her," said Valeria, who had not felt prepossessed by Miss Armitage, yet did not like to hurt Madame Leclaire's feelings by admitting it.

"They know some nice people—Lord Horace Ellsmere; do you like him?"

Valeria, who had been lying on a soft, comfortable couch, rose and walked to the window, so that Madame Leclaire could not see her face.

"Lord Ellsmere?" she replied. "Ah, yes, I remember him. He was handsome, was he not, and looked aristocratic?"

"He is," said Madame Leclaire. "The Ellsmere

family is one of the oldest in England. Poor Lord Ellsmere! he would be a very rich man now but for a strange peculiarity in the Ellsmere property."

"Indeed," said Valeria. "To whom does it belong, then?"

"To a young girl, daughter of the late countess, who died so recently. Do you not remember?"

"You forget that I have been living a retired life," said Valeria Temple. "I have seen little or no society, and it is scarcely to be expected that Valeria Temple should know anything of the great Ellsmere family."

"Just so, my dear," said Madame Leclaire, and hastened to change the subject.

"You see, we have made the acquaintance of our eccentric young neighbour sooner than we expected to have done. Come, you saw something of and talked a long while with him. You must tell me what you think of him."

"He is handsome, I suppose," said Valeria, returning to her seat, now that the conversation had changed, and speaking with a dreamy, absent air.

"Certainly, he was very earnest."

"Is that all you have to say in his favour?" asked Madame Leclaire, with a smile. "Now, I thought him very handsome and very noble looking, which is better than being handsome. How strange that we should meet him at the Armitages, and that he should be living so near to us. I can see the light in his studio window from here sometimes. Perhaps he is working to-night, as he does frequently," and she walked to the window, drew aside the blind, and looked out.

"Stars are all the light I can see," she said. "Shall we retire, Valeria?"

Valeria Temple rose and held out her hand.

"I am not tired yet, but you must go—nay, I will take no refusal. You must!" and Madame Leclaire, kissing the girl's white forehead, retired.

Valeria waited until she had gone, then she caught up a light shawl, and, throwing it over her head, murmured:

"I should not sleep if I were in bed; my brain seems teeming with thoughts and ideas. This room

stifles me. I can steal out into the courtyard and find room to think beneath the stars and the sky."

So saying, she passed down the old-fashioned stairs into the front garden and took her seat on a rustic bench, which had been placed years ago near the statue of Silence.

There in the silence she could think and plan.

The events of the night had shown her clearly that if she meant to keep her oath she must devise some means of doing so far different to the supine life she was leading now.

"What can I do?" she murmured. "One amongst so many! Where am I to find the man upon whom I am to wreak the vengeance which my mother stored up through all the years of her life and for the hope of which she has racked and ruined mine? Where is he or his? They may be near me or miles and miles away. I have to discover them by secret, hidden means. Secret?" she repeated. "How can I do so with my own identity always so plain and distinct? Wherever I go those who have seen me once will know me as Valeria Temple. I must use cunning and stealth. I must be able to move in different societies undetected, unrecognized, and unfettered. A young girl can go nowhere alone. I must be an old woman, a nun—ay, and if necessary, a man!"

The boldness of the idea shocked her for a moment, but the brave, fearless blood within her veins ran quickly at the idea, and she half-rose with the strength of her new determination.

"Yes," she murmured. "I must find some disguise which will allow me to mix in the crowded saloon and in the streets of cities unnoticed and unrecognized. I must find also some disguise which will serve as a passport, and by its aid I will commence the search which a dying mother's last words have allotted me."

Then her thoughts took a new channel and turned in a strange, unaccountable way to the Edgar Raven whom she had met that evening.

She could not dismiss the face or the voice of the handsome stranger from her mind, try as she would, and at last the fountain's music and the silence of

the night acted upon her and she leant back asleep.

As she lay thus, her figure, in its light shawl and decked in the jewels she had worn at the soirée, could just be distinguished from the gate.

A man, dressed in disreputable garments and wearing a villainous fur cap above a villainous-looking face, happened to be tramping past, and, looking through the gate on the chance of prey, so distinguished her.

The tramp stopped and peered more closely than at first, then muttered, hoarsely:

"Wot's that? A—a statu? No, a help me it's a woman! Dressed up, too, and with somethin' sparklin' on! She's mighty quiet! I shouldn't wonder if she's gone to sleep. I'll try her!"

And he gave vent to a little carking sound meant to represent a cough.

The sleeping figure did not move, and the footpad, after waiting a moment or so, ventured to push the gate open a foot or so.

Then he stood motionless a little while, scanning the windows of the house and the next one with stealthy, twinkling little eyes.

Satisfied that he was not observed, he dropped on all-fours on the grass and commenced slowly crawling towards the sleeping girl.

All unconscious of the tableau presented within so short a distance from him, Edgar Raven, as disinclined for bed as his fair neighbour, was smoking a cigar in the court-garden of his own house.

Smoking and thinking.

The two go well together, and satisfactory results in the latter are often produced by the aid of the former.

But Edgar Raven's conclusions were not at all satisfactory, and after he had finished his cigar he flung the end away with a muttered:

"Ah, dear me! All the thinking in the world will not alter the fact that I am a restless, impatient, extravagant, fanciful vagabond, so I had better go to bed. Nearly morning now though, and scarcely worth while. I wonder did I offend her? She went off without a word. No, it was not offense; it was sheer indifference, and she is now asleep with no more remembrance of Edgar Raven than the glass has from which I drank."

By this time he had reached the room in which he slept.

It was a front room and overlooked the court-garden of Valeria Temple's house.

As was his wont he raised the blind so that the first rays of the morning sun might awake him, and in a moment he saw the white figure seated beside the statue and fountain.

He stared and passed his hand across his eyes.

"Am I dreaming?" he muttered, "or is that the girl herself seated there as motionless as death?"

He looked again and again, and at last slowly and quietly opened the window, which was framed like a French casement.

Then he stepped on to the balcony and leant over, his eyes fixed eagerly upon the figure.

Suddenly, and without warning of any kind, he saw a second figure rise stealthily and gradually from the ground into a kneeling position within a dozen yards of the girl.

The face turned up to the sky was that of a street ruffian. Edgar could almost fancy that he could see the eyes, serpent-like, fixed upon the girl's face.

For a moment he was too stunned to move.

What did it mean? Why did she not move—cry out—give the alarm?

Then it all flashed upon him.

She was asleep.

The man was a thief who had been tempted into the garden by her jewels, and would probably murder her for them!

As the truth flashed upon him—there where he stood, powerless to save her—the man made another upward movement, and, drawing himself to his feet, stood over the girl with one hand upraised grasping a life-preserver.

One moment, if she moved, and the murderous weapon would descend upon her beautiful head.

Already the thief's hand was stretched out towards the bracelet upon her white arm.

What should he do?

A thought struck him. With a noiseless spring he gained the room within.

He snatched up a Minie rifle which stood loaded by his bed, and with another returned to the balcony.

Although the movement had occupied scarcely a minute, the thief had secured the bracelet, and was fumbling at the diamond necklace round the throat of the girl.

Edgar Raven raised the rifle.

As he did so Valeria, feeling the ruffian's presence more than his touch, shuddered slightly and opened her eyes.

With a cry of horror she sprang to her feet.

The thief raised his weapon, and at the very nick of time Edgar Raven's bullet had penetrated his arm.

With a yell of fright and pain, the footpad dropped the life-preserver and turned in the direction whence the report had rung.

Edgar, rifle in hand, had flung himself over the balcony and on to the wall of division between the two courts.

The thief saw the stalwart figure of the deliverer as it pounded down upon flower-beds, and, with a snarl of a disappointed and infuriated wolf took to his heels and darted across the lawn and through the gate.

The next moment Valeria's bewildered gaze rested upon Edgar Raven where he stood beside her, his arm ready to catch her if she should fall.

"Who is it?" she breathed, affrightedly. "Who is it?"

"I—Edgar Raven, my dear lady," said Edgar, calmly and soothingly as he could.

"Do not be alarmed; all cause for fear has gone! You are now quite safe—quite. Pray do not be frightened!"

"I am not frightened now," said Valeria, struggling with her breath, which came short and with difficulty. "I have had such a fearful dream; I cannot think how I came to fall asleep! A dream? No, it could not have been, or why are you here? My bracelet too! Oh, it is gone! It is all true then, and you—you have saved my life!"

The accent of the last words, so full of deep, well-assured gratitude, made Edgar's heart leap, and well nigh overthrow his calm.

"No—no!" he said, "not that indeed! Believe me I should not have fled, but that I saw it was necessary to frighten the assassin!"

Valeria sank into the chair and looked up with a grave, grateful smile.

"No," she said, "I remember all now! The weapon was above my head, when his arm dropped. Assuredly you have saved my life! How can I thank you? What shall I say?"

"Say nothing," he said, with such carefulness as he could throw into his voice. "It was a lucky accident that I should be standing with my gun, and that I should have seen the ruffian. But I am forgetting your bracelet!" he broke off to exclaim.

"He cannot have got far, for I hit him in the arm; if you will allow me to see you safely into the house I will follow on his track."

To his surprise Valeria stretched out her hand and grasped his arm.

"No, no!" she said, in a low, hurried voice. "Let him go; please do not pursue him! Let him go. I do not mind the bracelet, I would rather lose every jewel I have than that there should be any pursuit, any publicity! Let him go! He is punished enough, more than enough!"

Edgar stared.

"At least," he said, "let me see you safely in, that I may give the information to the police."

"By no means!" said Valeria, so firmly and earnestly that Edgar's astonishment increased. "I repeat that I do not care for the bracelet; and for the rest, I am unharmed while he has perhaps received his death-blow! Forgive me, but I do entreat you most earnestly to let the matter rest."

Her voice softened into beseeching music over the last words, and Edgar, who would have granted any request she could make to him in that voice, bowed low.

"He is at your disposal," he said. "I will not pursue him if you do not wish it. Are you sure that you are not hurt? Are you quite safe?"

"Yes, see," she said, holding up her arm. "I do not think he has touched me scarcely." And she shuddered. "What an escape, and I owe it to you!" and once more the music of admiration and gratitude rang through him.

"Forget that," he said, with a light laugh. "It is not worth remembrance. A fortunate accident only. But look and see if you have all your other ornaments safe."

She touched her earrings and other jewellery carefully.

"Yes, they are all safe excepting my bracelet, and I do not care for that. Who would when one thinks that it might have been life as well?"

Her shawl had fallen from her, and Edgar, noting it on the ground, picked it up and replaced it on her shoulders with a reverential gesture.

"Thank you," she said. "And this is the end of a most lovely night. We seem fated to meet," she said, suddenly.

"Yes," said Edgar. "Dare I hope that we may meet again and under more favourable auspices?"

"None better than these," she said, looking up at him where he stood, stalwart, strong, her deliverer.

"These are most unpleasant," he said, with a smile.

"Had I known that you would not have allowed me

to capture that rascal I should have aimed a little nearer his heart I think. He has got off too easily."

Valeria shuddered.

"No!" she said. "Why should you feel so bitter? I have forgiven him already."

"I shall never forgive him for having dared to touch you," murmured Edgar, almost inaudibly.

"You are too noble to bear malice, and too honourable to go from your word," she said, suddenly.

"Will you add to the great, immeasurable service you have done me a favour—small to one so brave as you?"

"I will grant you anything you ask," said Edgar, "and call it a favour to me."

"Will you keep this incident locked up in your breast, a secret?" she said. "I have been listening to hear some alarm, but there seems to be none. The report has roused no one. It will be a secret if you will keep it one."

"What has occurred shall never pass my lips," he said, quietly.

"I knew that you would promise," she said. "It is noble of you to refrain from asking reasons for such reserve, and I thank you."

"No thanks are due," said Edgar, half bending over her with an air of protection which seemed natural to him after what he had done. "Why should I ask?"

"For curiosity's sake," she said. "I can tell you this at least," she added, "that I would rather have died than appear before the world to punish that poor creature, Mr. Raven, I desire to escape publicity. I am all alone in the world, and would remain so. Do not think me ungrateful," she added, quickly, as Edgar, naturally wounded, rose to his full height and stopped back. "I shall always be grateful to my life-saver, and I would have you remember that, if when we meet I shall seem to have forgotten what you have done for me."

She rose as she spoke, and, with her sweet, grave smile, held out her hand.

Edgar took it.

"May I go with you as far as the door?" he asked.

She shook her head.

"No, I am quite safe; you shall take no farther trouble for me to-night. Good night!"

He held her hand a moment and bowed so low over it that she fancied she felt his silken moustache touch it.

Then she withdrew her fingers from his firm, warm grasp and glided from him.

He waited until she had reached the door, saw her pause a moment and look back at him, then disappeared, and then he roused himself with a start, shook himself slightly, and made a spring at the wall.

He gained the top and dropped over to the other side, mounted slowly up to his room, and, lighting his beloved moratorium, dropped into a chair.

The night gave place to dawn, the dawn to sunrise, and still Edgar Raven sat and smoked on, motionless and deep in thought.

CHAPTER VIII.

In one of the arteries leading from the busy thoroughfares of Oxford Street there stood, hemmed in a corner by dust and weather-grimed houses more pretensions than itself, a little, old-fashioned shop which bore over its dull, unattractive window the legend:

"Jeremy Popplechick, Costumier."

Any day, when the sun was strong enough to pierce the dust-covered windows, and so light up the interior of the shop, Jeremy Popplechick might be seen seated behind his counter employed in arranging his stock costumes or improving his mind by the perusal of a volume of old plays.

Mr. Popplechick was of the age whereof the exact tally is a mystery.

He might have been, judging from his hair, which was of a sandy gray, and by his wrinkles, which were many, fifty or sixty; on the other hand, there was a brightness in his eye which might have led a conjecturer into a guess of five-and-thirty, and again, judged by the extreme sparseness of his figure and bent back, he might have been somewhat between ninety and one hundred and fifty.

Mr. Popplechick's friends—few in number and peculiar in character—declared old Pop—as they facetiously termed him—did not know his own age, that he never was born, and furthermore that he had developed, sandy-gray, wrinkled and worn, from an old tarnished suit of the Georgian era.

Mr. Popplechick's friends were mostly of the theatrical profession.

Old-fashioned actors who preferred this slow coach style of business of the old costumier's to the slapdash, go-a-head style of the new.

They could depend upon Mr. Popplechick, "Old Pop and Chicky, my boy," to turn out a costume complete

and correct, and if a man put himself into old Pop's hands—he might rest easy with the assurance that he would not leave them until he really looked like the character he wished to represent.

No. 29 was the number of Mr. Popplechick's house, and it was situated in Curry Street.

He occupied the whole of the house, or rather his stock did, for he lived in the top attic, and had the satisfaction of feeling every night as he went to bed that if the house did happen to catch fire from the bottom he must at least be the last to burn.

Mr. Popplechick lived alone with the exception of a little girl, whom he had found one night lying—and dying—outside the portico of Drury Lane Theatre.

The child—a strange, elf-like creature, with ideas and intelligence far beyond her years—was the pride of Mr. Popplechick's heart and the one bright spot in his monotonous existence.

Her name—given to her by her adopted parent—was Elfy, a name he had come across in the course of his readings in the old dramatists.

Elfy had become abbreviated to Elfy, and sometimes to Elf, and her name fitted the owner.

In stature she was small, too well made for her age to be tall; with a pair of small, sharp gray eyes, which twinkled like needles when her eldritch mirth and wickedness were cropping up, and a mass of short, curling hair, which sat round her little head like a negro's wool, though of much lighter colour and softer texture.

Elfy deserves this lengthy description, for she was a remarkable child, and plays no small part in our drama.

On a bright September afternoon, soon after that scene at the Armistages', Mr. Popplechick sat in his chair behind the counter, deeply engrossed in "Alfonso the Terrible; or, The Baudet of the Mountain," an old drama of the thunder and lightning school.

He was alone in the house, Elfy being gone on an errand.

Business was rather slack, consisting just then in the chance visit of some street Arab, who, just for a change from nothing to do, would occasionally push open the low door, poke his head in and shout "Hi!" to attract and divert, and perchance to raise the ire of Mr. Popplechick.

Although this incident occurred frequently throughout the day Mr. Popplechick never grew accustomed to the interruption, and invariably when an impatient boy threw open the door and shouted "Hi!" or "Hullo, Pop!" or "Who's your hatter?" he would rise slowly, set down the book face downwards, and make a struggle for the door, which, as the space between the counter and the open door was generally blocked up with bales and bundles of costumes, Mr. Popplechick never reached until the troublesome urchin was, say, a mile and a half off.

Then Mr. Popplechick would struggle, bark, shake his long, thin head wrathfully and resign himself to the fascination of his volume until the next rude urchin chanced along and fetched him out.

On this September afternoon Mr. Popplechick had enjoyed an interval of immunity and had got far into the "Alfonso," when his shop door was gently pushed back and a lady entered.

Mr. Popplechick was so entranced that he did not look up, and, merely crying out in a shrill voice: "Get away, you young vagabond! I'm after you," continued his reading.

The lady stopped short and looked round with surprise, then, approaching the counter, she said, in a low, clear voice:

"Are you the principal of this shop?"

Mr. Pop started, rose slowly and executed a stage bow, peering over the rim of his spectacles meanwhile.

"I am, ma'am," he said. "What can I do for you? I'm sorry I didn't hear you come in, or rather I'm sorry I took you for one of them impudent young rascals who are always interfering with—ahem!—business. I thought you were going to call out 'Hi!'"

The lady—no other than Valeria Temple—smiled at the explanation and took the chair which Mr. Popplechick had leaned over the counter to push forward for her.

"You are a costumer?" she said, after allowing her eyes to wander round the gloomy shop, returning at last to the strange figure of the proprietor. "I saw your name over the door—Jeremy Popplechick, costumer."

"Costumes supplied on sale or hire on the shortest notice. Dress swords and armour lent on reasonable terms," replied Mr. Popplechick, quoting from an advertisement which had appeared for years in the old-fashioned journal, which no one ever read. "Yes, ma'am, I am a costumer. I make, sell, hire, purchase or take in exchange all kinds of costumes on equitable terms. My occupation's humble, but my

heart is true; be fair with me and I'll be fair with you."

This was a quotation from one of the old dramatists with which Mr. Popplechick often enlivened his conversation.

"I understand," said the lady, whom Mr. Popplechick saw was handsome, and whom he took for a professional. "I can purchase here a few costumes which would completely disguise and conceal my identity?"

"You can, ma'am, and I don't deceive you when I assure you that, in the words of the poet, your mother in vain would seek from week to week if I got you up on purpose to slip her. Now what characters do you want? Is it a make-up for Constance, or Lady Teazle, or the Belle of the Village? You've only got to name it, and here to your hand, as you may say, the secret lies."

And Mr. Popplechick struck an attitude, sent his eyebrows on a visit to the top of his forehead and waved his hand dramatically round the shop.

"Thank you," said the young lady, with a grave smile and a slight hesitation. "I must ask your advice, I think. I am not a great actress, indeed I am a very poor one, and my success must turn necessarily upon the excellence of my disguise. I am dark—"

"Dark as the night which broke o'er Hebra's head," murmured Mr. Popplechick, musingly.

"I have a sallow complexion—"

"Not sallow, ma'am—permit me to substitute olive," said Mr. Popplechick.

"And I am tall for a woman. Can you so alter those particulars, or seem to alter them, that my identity could be concealed?"

"Ma'am," said Mr. Popplechick, "I can make you as fair as the lily which nods on Lebanon, as short as a Dutchwoman, and as different from your real self as—as—" here he looked round the shop in despair for a simile, and at last said, in desperation, "as a live lobster is to a boiled one."

Again the young lady smiled.

"Can you give me a proof of what you state?" she asked.

"Certainly," said Mr. Popplechick, pressing his nose against the casement of the shop window.

"My little girl will be in directly, and if you please, ma'am we'll just try a fair and stumpy, or an old and caroty: I can make you both, as I say, and long may they wander o'er hill or dale, ere they can discover which you may be. If you'll wait until my little girl comes in, I'll look up a fair and stumpy," and, with a jerky bow, Mr. Popplechick struggled over the bundles and commenced a search amongst the drawers and boxes for the necessary costumes.

While he was thus engaged the door was flung open with a crash, and a young girl reached the middle of the shop with a bound, struck an attitude and, in a mock-heroic tone, exclaimed:

"Behold the herring! Father, I couldn't get a bloater, so I bought a kippered. Kipperd isn't bad when they're not over-smoked, and this one the master of the shop said would eat like a ham. Now I'll go and cook it. What time would you like your tea? Polly, put the kettle on, and sing the cat to sleep!" she sang, in a clear, childish voice.

"My dear!" hinted Mr. Pop, with a grimace in the direction of Valeria.

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl, popping the herring under her apron with spasmodic alacrity. "I didn't see. Is it anything I can do, father?"

"Yes, my dear," said Mr. Popplechick. "Take the lady into the dressing-room and make her up fair and stumpy. She knows how to do it quite as well as I do, ma'am," he added to Valeria, with pardonable pride. "She's very quick, and for eyebrows and mountain idiots has no equal. This way if you please, ma'am."

And with another jerky bow he held open a door at the back for Valeria to pass through.

Elfy took the clothes from the old man and proceeded Valeria into a small room which was set apart as a dressing-room for the use of the lady patrons of Mr. Popplechick.

Valeria quietly removed her bonnet and dress and watched with grave interest the childish fingers as they rapidly arranged the various parts of the disguise.

"Now, miss, if you please, you must put these on first," said the girl, handing a pair of low boots without heels. "And now this dress: it's long in the body and made full. You'll see what a difference it will make. And now you must sit down and let me finish you off. Here's a new wig father has just bought! Isn't it a beauty? Ah! if I had a wig like that I'd cut all my hair off: my head was made to clean guns with, Jerry Brown says—and I says his was made for a mop-stick. You've got beautiful hair; pity you can't play the character dark. What is the character—you haven't told me yet? and where are you going to play?"

"That would be telling too much, perhaps," said

Valeria watching the sharp gray eyes as they glanced at her face curiously.

"Oh, very well, miss," said Elfy. "I beg your pardon. Now, then, keep quite still while I line your face. Now, you want to look fair—and pretty?"

"No, I don't care about being pretty," said Valeria.

"Hem! that's strange," murmured Elfy, audibly, "they all want to be pretty before everything else, generally. Not pretty: you are pretty now, miss, as it is, but I can alter you, if you like with a stroke—and!" and she drew a line across the forehead and beneath the eyes.

"Now look," she exclaimed and suddenly threw aside a curtain from before a mirror.

Valeria raised her eyes and started.

Before her was the reflection of a fair, wrinkled, characterless face, as different from her own as indeed are live and boiled lobsters from each other.

She stared with amazement, the girl standing looking up at her with winking, triumphant eyes.

"Now stand up," she said.

And Valeria stood up.

"Where are you now?" asked Elfy, with gleeful assurance. "You're down in the dumps now; you were up in the skies just now. Are you satisfied?"

"Quite," said Valeria. "You are a wonderful little creature," she added, looking down upon her with a smile of interest.

"No, I'm not," said Elfy, with decision and gravity. "I'm not wonderful at all; anybody can do this, but it isn't everybody who can do some things. Now, father he is wonderful! He can make a man of thirty into a little infant prodigy six years old! Oh, he can, and easy. That's wonderful, if you like, and, oh!" she cried, clasping her hands, "it is beautiful to see him touching up the face—it must be fat, you know—until it looks like a little boy's face when he's been eating too much pudding! That is clever, and father is clever. I'm only an ordinary little nobody, I am, miss. Now, how will that do?"

"Very well," said Valeria. "Please put them aside; I want you to try and make me into a very old woman. Can you do so?"

"Can I?" repeated Elfy. "Of course I can; that's easy. Let me see, let me see."

And, talking as she moved about, she, with rapid facility, altered the clothes and the make-up of the face until Valeria saw in the mirror an exact representation of a wrinkled old woman tottering on the verge of the grave.

"Now stand up, miss, bend a little, and talk with your tongue pressed against your teeth. That's it! Beautiful! Miss, I'm sure you will make a success."

"I hope so," said Valeria, and a grave smile stole over her face. "Will you help me to change these things, and pack them up for me? If you will show me how to paint my face, I shall be very much obliged, and will pay you well."

"Ah!" said Elfy, shaking her head, "you can't buy that part of the costume, miss, you must learn it. However, I'll show you how it is to be done."

And with the same rapidity she caught up the brushes and colours, and, upon her own face, showed Valeria how the wrinkles, the bloom, and the various characteristic colourings were done.

Valeria listened and watched with the same grave earnestness, the sad smile often curving her lips at the blithe, shrewd words of the child-woman.

At last Elfy gathered the pigments and wigs together, and sat herself upon the bundle of costumes, with her arms folded and her bright eyes turned up towards the sweet face of the lady.

"You're a sweet, pretty face, lady," she said, with a nod of the head. "It's a rare pity that these ugly things hide it. Fancy covering such beautiful hair as this!"

And with a quick movement she leant forward and took a heavy coil of Valeria's hair within her small hand.

"Beautiful! Ah! miss, what would he give for a lock of it. Just what I can squeeze in my hand, so."

And she pressed it tightly, then throw it out into a shower on her arm.

"He? whom?" asked Valeria, humouring the child.

"Your sweetheart, miss," said Elfy. "Ah, you mustn't shake your head. There must be some one in love with this beautiful, beautiful hair. Is he dark, miss, or fair? But, there, I'm forgetting myself. Father says I do, and he taught me to talk like the little girls in his play-books, but I can't; now could you?"

And she struck an attitude, then assumed a grave face like those represented in the old books of good little girls, and whined out:

"I thank you, gentle lady, for your goodness, may

Heaven shower blessings on your generous heart! There that's how father would like me to talk, bless him! but I can't. I always laugh and that spoils it. But he's clever, is father! He can repeat the whole of Alfonso, or, the Bride of the Forest, and you can fancy it is Alfonso if you don't look at him. Then he can do the Bandit of the Mountain beautiful, like this, 'Hah! ha! proud tyrant, tremble—tr—tremble! Your doom is nigh!' and the child shook her head, frowned, stamped her foot, and looked as terrific as it was possible for her to look.

Valeria gazed and smiled, but Elfy's mood changed instantly to one of business.

'I'm keeping you, miss,' she said, jumping up and taking the bundle from the floor. 'Where shall I send these?'

'I will take them with me,' said Valeria. 'I can hire a cab and I will pay for them now and take them away. Can you carry so large a bundle?'

'Can I?' repeated Elfy, and to express her sublime contempt for the burden she stepped downstairs with it as lightly as a fairy.

Valeria took out her purse and put the required sum in her little hand, and a sovereign in the other. Mr. Popplechick had gone for a cab. Then she stooped and kissed the child, moved by an uncontrollable impulse of pity for the elfish, solitary being. Like herself, the child was alone in the world, with no mother and no friend save that of one old man. It was not much, that womanly, pitying kiss, but the child had never received caress from woman's lips before, and all her childish love and gratitude sprang up at that touch and ran over. Through all her life she would remember that kiss and the tender face of the lady who had given it.

Elfy looked bewildered for a moment, then she dropped the bundle, and, with her eyes full of tears, ran into the parlour at the back.

Mr. Popplechick, aided by the cabman, placed the bundle inside the cab, and Valeria was driven away with her strange purchases.

'Elfy,' called old Pop, stumbling into the parlour, 'where are you, child?'

'Here, father,' said Elfy, coming out from a dark corner. 'Here is the money and—this the lady gave me for myself; I don't want it, father, you may have it: she gave me something better and I'll keep that.'

'Elfy!' said Mr. Popplechick, chuckling over the money. 'What was that, Elfy?'

'A kiss,' said the child, in a low, thoughtful voice. 'Father, no other woman ever kissed me; why did she do it? Father, do you think we shall ever see her again?'

'Elfy? I don't know, Elfy. I suppose not. Strange person, eh? Lady, Elfy. Looked like the Bride of the Forest. Wonder who she is! Burst on our gaze, Elfy, like a vision from the realms of light; gone from our gaze like a star in the night.' What's the matter, Elfy, why, you aren't crying? Oh, dear me, dear me! Go and wash your face, dearie, and we'll have tea.'

'No!' said Elfy, 'I'll never wash my face any more. I'll keep her kiss as long as I live. Father, I shan't eat my herring; I'll toast it though, and you can eat it and do 'Alfonso.' What did she kiss me for if she's never coming any more?'

(To be continued.)

MISSPENT TIME.

THERE has been so much said and written about ladies of the present day—of their idleness and extravagance—that the subject has been worn threadbare.

In our humble opinion they are not the only ones who thus waste precious time. The fashionable butterfly, who gives her gorgeous dress an exhibition and airing on fine days in the park, and lolls, sleep, and reads on rainy ones, is indeed contemptible, and richly deserves censure; but are there not others in the opposite extreme equally censurable?

We have seen industrious ladies, not a few, who made a boast of accomplishing half a day's work before sunrise.

Was this wise? We answer no. By cheating nature of her needed rest we only cheat ourselves. The feeling of lassitude after such over-early exertion unfits one for the rest of the day's duties.

Industry is always commendable, and early rising good, if not carried to extremes; but we have known instances where the ambitious worker would have been the gainer by doing less. For instance, a young lady of wonderfully industrious habits very properly gave her assistance to her mother, who could not afford to keep a servant. There were seven children to feed and clothe, which required much time and labour, but by system and good management there were intervals each day that should have been spent in rest and recreation.

The 'smart girl' didn't take either. Making

some fanciful parlour ornaments, crocheting dozens of tidies, embroidering unnecessary articles, working caricatures of animals on canvas—these all pleased the eye, certainly, but at what cost?

She is now bemoaning her hard fate—her eyesight is almost gone. True, she can show lots of fine needlework, but what is that compared to what she has lost?

Another instance is a young lady who was brought up in affluence and ease, but, by a reverse of fortune so common in these times, was thrown unexpectedly upon her own resources.

She had excellent health, and was accustomed to outdoor exercise, but when she became a teacher this was neglected.

Instead of taking exercise and recreation, after school hours she undertook to acquire several languages, beside practising her music. Do you wonder that she soon fell a victim to overtaxed nerves?

Had she not undertaken too much at once, and given rest to mind and body when they so much needed it, we should not have been called to read her obituary.

She was quoted as a perfect model by many mothers, and her zeal was certainly commendable, had she not carried it to excess.

Had she made judicious efforts after knowledge, and not neglected the casket that held the mind, how different would have been the result?

Instances innumerable could be shown where ladies of industrious habits overdo themselves, but we do not cite these cases to advocate the example of those lazy drones who are not only objects of pity, but also of contempt.

L. C.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE.

Has thou, 'midst life's empty noises,
Heard the solemn steps of time?
And the low, mysterious voices
Of another clime?

Early hath life's mighty question
Thrilled within thy heart of youth,
With a deep and strong beseeching,—
What, and where, is truth?

Not to ease and aimless quiet
Doth the inward answer tend;
But to works of love and duty,
As our being's end.

Earnest toil and strong endeavour
Of a spirit, which within
Wrestles with familiar evil
And besetting sin;

And without, with tireless vigour
Steady heart, and purpose strong,
In the power of truth assaileth
Every form of wrong.

THE CAUSES OF DRUNKENNESS.

WE might sum up the causes that lead to over-consumption of alcohol under the following heads:—

1. The want of oxygen is an undeniable cause of drunkenness. The exhilarating medium of life, oxygen itself, is alcoholic, we might say. It is a constant irritant, and therefore exhilarating. If the air has become exhausted of a portion of oxygen, it has a lowering effect upon the human system, a desire to make up for this drives men and women to alcoholic consumption. It will be said, why then drunkenness in rural districts? But no one yet proved that drunkenness was as prevalent in rural districts as in towns, and if it exists there at all, it will be partly caused by the dullness and sameness of life. The system will have exhilaration, and if it cannot have it in the mode of life it gets it out of spasmodic and vicious action.

2. Want of nutritious and aromatic food; and this is, perhaps, the strongest of all causes of drunkenness. The absorbed vitality wants replacing, and in default of being replaced by absorption of solid nourishment, which acts regularly in conjunction with systematic functions, a craving for spasmodic stimulants is raised, and leads easily to excess. It is, however, often not only the want of solid as of aromatic food; for continual heavy food will exhaust the digestive organs and cause feebleness as much as under-nourishment, producing the over use of stimulants. A constant use of aromatic foods is necessary, particularly in our artificial town-life, to form a continual stimulating action, and replace the natural exhaustion consequent on the inhalation of vitiated atmospheric air. The volatile oils, contained in stimulating foods, are safeguards against drunkenness or over consumption of alcohol.

3. Unsettled meals. The ill-regulated provision for supplying food to the body is a great cause of

drunkenness. It is no use for wives and mothers to exclaim against the drunkenness of their husbands and sons if that which would obviate drunkenness—regularity of meals—is not attended to.

4. Irregular work. It is possible to draw a line where to meet drunkenness and where not in trade. Regular occupation and regular hours are preventative of exhaustion of vitality, and therefore do not tax the system as heavily as sudden occupation at irregular intervals, prolonged beyond endurance. The man who has to work a long run of hours at a stretch has no taste for regular food, but flies to spasmodic sustenance; the man or woman whose energies are taxed suddenly, extravagantly and spasmodically, will supply vitality in the same way by stimulants.

5. Want of sleep. There is no greater foe to sobriety than want of sleep; it eats into the very marrow of vitality. Want of sleep is want of replacement of energy, and what cannot be obtained in one way will be obtained in another. Long wakefulness exhausts the system and requires stimulant action; when this is called into requisition we are no longer sure of the consequences.

PAINTED FACES.

WE hear a great deal now-a-days about "painted faces."

When our good people of the church speak of the wicked actors and actresses who tread the boards of our theatres they remark upon their painted faces, just as though there were no painted faces sitting Sabbath after Sabbath in their holy congregation.

Now, for the life of us we cannot see why there should be so much fuss made about painting, since everybody, almost, is guilty of it in some way or shape, and everybody else knows it.

We have the pleasure of enjoying a large circle of acquaintances, and, to speak within bounds, nine-tenths of them either paint, powder, dye their hair or whiskers, or "touch up" their eyebrows, and we have no doubt but that the other tenth indulge in the same thing, only in not quite so evident a manner.

Do not understand us as advocating the practice. We have nothing to say about that at present. We only deal with the fact as it exists. Everybody knows that nearly all our fashionable women and a large number of our fashionable men use cosmetics daily, and why they should indulge in so many scornful flings at "painted faces" beats us.

Now, is it any more reprehensible for an actress, whose good looks is her fortune, to resort to Magical Balm and Pearly White and Roseate Bloom than it is for her aristocratic sister to use "just a little magnesia to take away the moisture and disagreeableness of heat and perspiration"?

The fact is nearly everybody paints, and they are foolish enough to imagine that nobody suspects it, when to the most casual observer it is just as evident as it would be if the placard were placed over their foreheads that we put upon our freshly renovated houses and fences, to warn the passer-by to keep off—"Paint."

They may not be outspoken about it, even when questioned—they will lift their hands in holy horror if you intimate such a thing; they will keep their rouge and powder under lock and key, and will go out to purchase it after dark, and in clever disguise, but that does not alter the fact.

Men everywhere sneer at painted faces as if they were the exception, and not the rule, and entirely forgetful that their own cheeks, and probably their noses, are rouged with brandy, which, by the way, is the very worst kind of paint in use.

Ministers may declaim against paint from the pulpit; doctors may point out death in the balm bottle; reformers may inveigh against it; woe of the scribbling fraternity may take up our pens to impale it, but men and women always have dyed and painted, and they always will.

THINK OF IT.—By doing good with his money a man may, as it were, stamp the image of the Creator upon it, but, beyond that, gold is of very little account in this world, and none at all in the next. It is not what we pick up in this sense, but what we give up that makes us rich. A Rothschild is forced to content himself with the same sky as the poor woman who sells apples at the corner of the street. All lungs are fed by the same air, while each individual possesses only his own thoughts, senses, soul and body—these are the property that a man owns. All that is really valuable is to be had for nothing in this world. Genius, beauty, and love are not bought and sold. You may buy a rich bracelet, but not a well-turned arm upon which to wear it—a pearl necklace, but not a pretty throat with which it shall vie. The richest banker on earth would vainly offer a fortune to be able to write a verse like Byron or Shakespeare.



[THE AWAKENING.]

OLD RUFFORD'S MONEY, WON WITHOUT MERIT, LOST WITHOUT DESERVING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Here with a cup that's stored unto the brim
We drink this health to you. *Shakespeare.*

WHEN the son of David said the heart of man was deceitful and desperately wicked he announced a truism that three thousand years have fully confirmed.

It was, perhaps, unfortunate for a young man of the lax morality and weak principle of Reginald Chesterton that he should have had the good luck, as he termed it, of getting with such facility out of the most embarrassing portion of the liabilities brought upon him by his self-indulgence and vices.

But so it was. The impression of the peril he had escaped, or rather, as he thought, which he had so cleverly evaded, soon faded from his mind, and, although resolving only to play for sums within his means to discharge in the event of loss, and determining to avoid night-houses and their frequenters, Reginald again, by degrees, spent more and more of his leisure in billiard-rooms.

Indeed, his passion for play, somewhat restrained for awhile, again ruled him. True, he confined his cue-practice to a couple of quiet establishments, principally patronized by City men and persons in Reginald's own sphere of life, eschewing the public gaming-tables of the west-end.

Here, however, the play now and then ran deep as the hours grew short and approached the ten minutes past twelve, at which the rooms were ordinarily closed.

The rooms we speak of were attached to and formed part of a respectable suburban tavern, in the neighbourhood of Reginald's new lodgings. These consisted of a first floor, including bedroom, in the house of an elderly widow lady, in narrow circumstances, whose friends, to avoid a burthen, had placed her in a well-furnished, moderate-sized dwelling, in order that she might thereby supplement an insufficient income left to her by her late husband, a London tradesman.

As Mrs. Bennett extended to her single gentlemen lodgers the privilege of a latch-key and a se-

parate chamber-lamp, there was little limit to their time of returning home, and by degrees Reginald's proclivity for late hours led him to make it the latest possible ere he sought his pillow.

His habits of life, in fact, were those of a loose young man, and in a few months, as he expended upon his personal gratification and indulgences all the ready money at his command within a very short interval from its periodical receipt, and also ran credit for some of the heavier items of a young man's expenditure, to wit, his wearing apparel, gloves, boots, and occasional small supplies of wines and cigars for the consumption of himself and bachelor visitors, Reginald, to use an expressive phrase, was "out-at-elbows," and pressed by numerous paltry debts.

So paltry did he consider them, that he could never think of mentioning them as "embarrassments" to Mr. Gilbert, or indeed to any other person.

Reginald's wit was sharpened by absolute need, and his play so much improved by constant practice and sedulous study, that his winnings, small as he considered them, furnished a subject of talk to the little circle frequenting the "King's Arms," and it soon became difficult for him to find an opponent, or be allowed to join in a game, unless he would consent to be handicapped and give a "start" to those who played against him.

On several occasions, too, young men who fancied their skill were brought against the "Camden Champion," as he was now called, and these he invariably defeated.

The landlord grew exceedingly gracious to such a "drawing card," and liberally refused, on several occasions, to take for the spirits, wine, or cigars consumed by Reginald, who, in a short time, came to view this as a mere business return.

Among the occasional visitors of the room was a west-end veterinary surgeon and horse-dealer, light Bridoon, a well-known sporting character.

Bridoon, who boasted himself "good at all in the ring," found Reginald completely his master in a long game, wherein he played his best, but got a hollow beating.

Bridoon determined not to lose sight of Reginald, and soon after the infatuated young man, in a moment of weak compliance and excitement, consented to allow that person to pen a paragraph in the leading sporting paper.

This was to the effect that an amateur, "Camden Jonathan" (by which pseudonym Reginald thought his identity sufficiently concealed) would play a match, one thousand up, with a certain professional, for fifty guineas a side. To come off at the "great-room," "King's Arms Tavern." To prevent over-

crowding, sixpence will be charged for admission.

On this event much money was wagered; and as the professional was well known, the more immediate friends of Reginald, under his assumed name, obtained liberal odds, and promised, as is usual in such cases, to "put on" Reginald for a "sov." or a "fiver" to nothing, as a stimulus to his exertions for success.

That success came. Well had it been for Reginald had it been defeat. Nearly two hundred pounds in notes and gold were in his possession by half-past ten o'clock on that fatal night; at eleven he was the flattered guest at a champagne supper, seated beside the president, Mr. Benjamin Bridoon. "The night drove on with songs and clatter," speeches were made, all to the glory and honour of the "Camden Champion," and every toast proved "an excuse for the glass."

Mr. Bridoon, as barker of the winner, put on "two dozen of fizz." Reginald followed with his "dozen;" he was not allowed to "stand" more.

Then came another and another "dozen" from winners; and at a few minutes beyond the twelve Reginald left in the president's vehicle, driving off amidst a hiccoughy cheer from a few of the latest winebibbers.

Reginald awoke that morning in a strange apartment. There was a dense, yellow, "London-particular" fog, through which the broad coppery disc of the winter sun struggled as through a smoked glass. His temples throbbed and his brain whirled, as he strove to recall the events of the few previous hours. He had an indistinct vision of more play, but not at billiards; it was this time cards, at which he lost much gold. Then there was another supper—yes, that was in the Haymarket, or near it. Then there was a struggle, and a fierce contest, of which he could recall nothing distinctly, except that the familiar faces of men and woman were mingled in the affray. The rest was—a blank!

Paroled with a raging thirst and distracted by a splitting headache, he arose. There lay his clothes in a dreadful plight, covered with street dirt, his hat utterly smashed, his garments thrown here and there in wild disorder. He got out of bed and sought the carafe. A tap at the bedroom door was followed by the appearance of his patron of the overnight.

"What, my champion of the board of green cloth, stirring already! I wouldn't have you woke on no account. There's my gal coming up with some hook and soda that'll put you straight a bit. Well, you did go the pace at last, and no mistake. 'Tis precious lucky you fell in with friends, or you'd

have been cleared out clean as a peashell, and that might not have been the worst of it either."

"Where am I?" asked Reginald, nervously. "Where are you? Why, at my own little crib at Brompton, my jolly cook, where else should you be? Do you think Ben Bridoon would leave a pal among such Philistines as got round you at Goodrod's? That fellow, Blacksheep Bowman, though he's no fight in him, has always got a set hand; that'll make it hot for anybody that muzzles him as you did. Ha, ha! how you did twist his white cloak surely! I thought his eyes were starting out of his head."

"I remember something indistinctly of that scoundrel. Then I did meet him—where was it?" "Why at the 'Saloon.' You were rather 'cut' before we left the 'Waterford,' but you said you would look in at Goodrod's, so I indulged you. I wish I hadn't now. We hadn't been there five minutes when suddenly you began to glare at the opposite table. 'That's he,' says you; and without another word you bolted across the room, and catching Blacksheep Bowman by the throat, down went the pair of you among glasses and bottles, and supper dishes—such a smash! The women screamed, and the waiters and men dragged you off him; and I can tell you, if it hadn't been for me and a chance pal or two of mine, you'd have been smashed there and then by Blacksheep's lot." During this speech Reginald had taken up his watch, which lay upon the drawers by the dressing-glass. Its glass was broken, the guard-chain snapped, and its entangled hands had crossed each other at twenty-two minutes past four. Mr. Bridoon observed the movement.

"Ah! that was another piece of good luck. If it hadn't been for Peggy Pratt you'd have been winning your ticket, that's certain. That girl is a trumper. She's dead nuts on you, I'm sure. She nailed it from a chap that had it in his hand, and gave it to me as your friend. I tipped her a sov. as we came away from the 'Pie,' and told her you'd give her another next time you saw her, and came to know how you must have lost it and never seen it again but for her pluck and honesty."

Reginald wished at the moment he had lost it; but he had not the courage to say so.

"Is it late?" asked Reginald, faintly. "Late? It's not much after eleven. But what matters the time? Are you thinking of the shop?"

Reginald groaned, and, sitting down on the bed-side, clasped his shuddering head between his hands. "Oh, ay, I desay there's a bit of the old us/s' tattoo goin' on in the upper story. Cheer up, my boy! You seem to have lost your almanack as well as the time of day," continued Mr. Bridoon, in chaffing tone. "You don't think, my young champion—how Reginald hated the word—that I'd have let you go the pace as you did after we left the 'King's Arms' if this hadn't been Christmas morning, and no shop to-day."

Reginald started and looked up with surprise. The recollection flashed upon him, for the first time since his waking, that this indeed was Christmas Day. A load seemed removed from his heart.

"I told you you'd lost your almanack," continued Bridoon. "Have you anything particular set down for to-day? There's a trotting-match at two o'clock at Ponder's End. Coal-Dick Rose against time, three miles in harness in nine minutes. The mare's given to break lately, whenever she's pushed, I've backed time, and there's some so sweet on her that I've got six to four. But here am I prating while your mouth, I know, is like a limeburner's stove."

While thus talking Mr. Bridoon had skillfully manipulated the "mixture" he had prescribed. First he poured from a slender, smoke-brown, yellow-sealed bottle, a "bottom" of Liebfraumilch; then, liberating dexterously the tongue of twisted wire from the loop over the stopper of the "Rawlings," he thrust the cork clean over with his right thumb at the same moment reversing the neck of the egg-shaped glass receptacle into the fitted pint tumbler in his left hand without the loss of a drop of the bubbling crystal liquid.

Reginald eagerly gulped down—there is no other word—the sparkling, soothing draught.

"That's your style," said Bridoon. "Does your shop open on Saturday? Some of the City concerns don't."

The half-holiday movement, and the feast of St. Lubbok, as yet were not even dreamt of, and the adage that "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" was not an acted proverb. So Reginald said they opened the bank on Saturday, and that the fact that this was a shut-up-day had restored him.

Bridoon broke in with:

"All right. I'll drive you down to the 'Pike and Anchor,' it'll freshen you up. My man shall brush up your legs and Mary shall see to any dropt stitches. Here, Mary!" and he took Reginald's boots himself on to the landing, "give these boots to Sam,

Now, my youngster, just turn out your pockets put your toes outside the door, and roll in for a short spell between the sheets, while they give your things a brush and polish. I'll come when they're ready, and meantime I'll get the gray mare put to Ta—ts, for ten minutes, old fellow."

And Mr. Bridoon descended the stairs. Reginald found his stock of sovereigns in the canvas bag sensibly diminished. There were only seventeen out of forty-four or forty-five, he was not certain which, of the golden portraits of Her Majesty remaining.

He remembered putting down gold on colour at rums-et-noir, and losing often, though he several times won. He had a vague idea that Bridoon stopped his farther play when he had lost twenty sovereigns. Thence he concluded the missing seven or eight pounds must have been spent or stolen.

He counted his notes, one hundred and forty pounds—they were all right. He felt that he was certainly lucky, and that he owed a debt of gratitude to Bridoon, whatever else he might feel as to his connection with such a character.

A thought flashed on his mind. Where was his private pocket-book, which he thought he had in the breast pocket of his frock coat when he went overnight to the "King's Arms?"

It contained various strictly private memoranda, some relating to business, others to family matters. There were his father's lost letters, and one or two from his sister Cecily; and—his wife will disguise nothing—in a very secret snuff-pocket there were pawnbrokers' duplicates of a diamond ring, which was his father's present on his twenty-first birthday, a valuable pocket chronometer, and several other valuables, which he had packed with at periods of pecuniary pressure.

He felt faint and sick at the thought of these things being in strange hands—there was, however, a chance that he had left it at home, and this he clung to.

Having ascertained the extent of his losses, Reginald placed the clock on the mantelpiece, and in a short time Bridoon again came up with the announcement that there was a "dill crop" of tea, a champagne, a blunder, a shovell, and a friends of home; and if there's anything else you'd fancy as a pick-me-up, why the gal shall fetch it in two-twos."

Reginald thanked him heartily. He also, for he was not very demonstrative, expressed his grateful feeling for his care during his madness of the morning, and his friendly service in his rescue from the fray in which his folly had involved him.

"Don't mention it, my boy. If it hadn't been for what would have come of it, I wish you had throttled that rascally lawyer. It would have been a service to society. You said something about his stealing your acceptance, but I couldn't quite make it out. Has he got any paper of yours now? because, if he has, I know how to drop on him and make him turn it up."

"No," said Reginald, "not now; he has been paid to give it up by the principal of the bank in which I am employed."

"The damned villain!" said Bridoon. "I'd have compensated him if I'd known of it. If ever you get into snare a scrape again, come to me and I'll compound it for you in quite another fashion—that I hope you won't. Just step down, if you're ready, and get in a good lining; then I'll give you a seat to Ponder's End, and back to Camden Town after the match. I don't think you'll get six to four, as I have, as many wise ones know the mare can do a mile in two-fores; take five, if you can't get six, and even sooner than that on it—it's coming money. The mare's been spoilt, to my knowledge."

In an hour they were on the road. A pleasant drive through the northern suburbs of London brought them through Holloway, by the Hornsey Sloice House, then a rural piscatorial retreat, now a brick and stucco tower, in the words of the auctioneer's advertisements, "of modern elevation, and commanding the immense trade of a populous neighbourhood."

Thence between hedgerows, where now stretches Finsbury Park, to the Green Lanes, to Queen Eleanor's Cross, at Tottenham. Nor did they forget to pull up, in company with several acquaintances, in trap and in saddle, whom they met or overtook on the road, at the renowned Johnny Gilpin's hostelry, the "Bell," at Edmonton, where that immortal "citizen of credit and renown" did not dine, because his horse preferred a gallop to Ware.

They passed, too, through the water, since bridged over, close by the rail, where the calculator's stand

Threw the Wash about
On both sides of the way,
Like to a mald who twirls a mop,
Or a wild-geese at play.

In ten minutes more they were at the "Pike and Anchor" grounds by the River Lea, where were already assembled many hundreds of people, whose

talk was of trotters past and present, of pace, time, and wonderful performances; also of taking or laying odds on the mare, or on her all-conquering opponent, the banner of the scythe and sand-glass.

During the twenty minutes which preceded the start, Mr. Bridoon had laid out for Reginald twenty-four pounds, obtaining five to four, money paid.

The first mile was covered in two minutes and thirty-four seconds, and the odds rose to seven to four on the mare. The second mile in two minutes, forty seconds; nearly a minute's gain on time. The backers of the animal were frank, offering two to one, which Mr. Bridoon took several times.

The cheering was tremendous. Started at the excessive noise, on some indistinctly declared, ality struck with a whip by some bystander, Coal-Black Rose sprang forward, broke into a most undeniably canter, which she persisted in for more than a hundred yards, in spite of the exertions of her driver and the shouts of the referee to "pull-up and turn."

The yell was deafening as again she turned to complete the distance. There was yet time to win. But, not in twenty-yard she once more changed her leg, then passed, again broke, and cantering in like a smoking-horse, was only stopped, when past the post by a declaration from the referee, that "Time was the winner; the distance not being trotted out."

Of course there were all the usual disputings, some blows and many oaths, which attend a disputed race. A protest was handed in to the representatives of "Bell's Life" by the owner of the mare against the money being given up by the stakeholder.

But, as most of the bets were posted, this had little effect beyond prolonging the squabble for a day or two.

The sport over, most of the company turned their own and their horses' faces Londonwards. Mr. Bridoon, Reginald, and a few friends dined at the old-fashioned hostelry, whence, as the short day closed in, that gentleman quickly drove Reginald by the shortest route to the "King's Arms."

There he was, indeed, warmly welcomed. After a glass of warm cognac, he gladly escaped from the congratulations. Bidding a hearty "good-bye" to Mr. Bridoon, Reginald, in better spirits than he had been for many a day, hastened home to count his winnings.

They amounted to thirty pounds on the match at five to four, twenty pounds in an after bet of two to one to ten pounds; making him fifty pounds richer than when he "took stock" of his cash in the bedroom at Mr. Bridoon's little snuggery and veterinary forge at Brompton.

We shall presently see how long this ill-earned wealth, for wealth it was to one in Reginald's embarrassed state, served to uphold that young man in the false position to which the giddy chance of gaming had for the moment elevated him.

For that purpose we must return for a while to other personages with whom he had unfortunately become entangled, owing entirely to his persistence in the folly and vice which had dominated his better nature and resolves.

CHAPTER XXIV.

In the dark, sawdust-smelling taproom of a public-house in a narrow street running under the tunnel-like arches of the congreries of railways converging from all parts of the southern and south-eastern suburbs and counties near London Bridge sat two men in low and deep converse.

The older had the appearance of a country tradesman, being dressed in a stout suit of sober-coloured dark gray tweed, with a hat of rustic make, somewhat low in the crown and broad in the brim, worsted stockings and extra-stout shoes; the younger had on a round-crowned felt of the sort called a "billy-cock," was enveloped in a large, heavy, dark great-coat, and wore, for it was one of his acquaintances, Joe Paget, a large pair of false dark whiskers and a dark wig, covering his natural light brown hair. He had, moreover, a woollen comforter round his neck brought well up about his throat and chin.

"I can tell you, Friend Joe," said Ephraim Ferrett, for he was the older of this cautious couple, "that it's a mercy I'm here to tell you of my escape from the grip of that desperate young villain. If it hadn't been for Barney Cross and Sambo Satten I should have been strangled before I could have cried Murder! I was vexed with Barney, though. The idiot couldn't keep his itching fingers quiet, but when he'd got the furious banker off my wass, he must fork his watch, which was bad if anything should grow out of it and I known to him. However, the clumsy rascal was bawled, for young Peggy Pratt—he's out her just now, but the girl is fond of him still—went in for him tooth and nail and Barney dropped the ticker, which Peggy gave to Ben Bridoon, who seems just now to have the young chap in tow."

"If that's the lay," remarked Joe Paget, drily, "I wish the young'un luck. He'll soon be sucked in and cleaned out too."

"The more reason we should make hay while the sun shines, for it'll soon be foul weather with him: Here's his reader" (pocket-book). "He dropped it in the scuffle, with some things in it he'd rather not have come into my hands. It's some consolation for the squeeze he gave me to have pinned this."

So saying Ephraim laid a Russia-leather pocket-book on the table. It was the very one for which Reginald had in vain made inquiry and fruitless search at home.

"There's something here, Joe, that will enable me to make all chalk even with that very nice young man and serve ourselves at the same time. Here's a memorandum-paper that cost me some trouble to unwrite. But I've found the key, and this is what it means: 'The Dover and Canterbury branch of the Mercantile Chartered will send up orders for cash and notes on the twenty-sixth'—that's to-day, Saturday—and the money will be remitted by parcel on Monday, by train leaving South Eastern terminus at 12.30 a.m.' Do you know, Joe, anything about the 12.30 train?"

"I should think so," replied Joe. "But it's not my train; mine's the 4.0 express. The guard of that will be No 31 or 35."

"I have it," said Ephraim. "The parcel must be had from the London office before starting. See, here's a sheet of the Mercantile Chartered letter paper and this is the way to do it."

Ephraim took a small screw-topped travelling inkstand from his pocket, turned the brass and pushing out a pen from the butt-end of his pencil-case wrote on the printed form as follows:

"MEMORANDUM.

"Mercantile Chartered Bank,

"Doe 23, noon.

"To the Guard of the 12.30 a.m. express.

"S. H. E.

"The bearer, a confidential clerk, has with him notes and bills which have been left out by mistake, but are to be enclosed in the two parcels directed respectively to the managers of the Dover and Canterbury branches of the above bank. Please to let him have the parcels for the purpose of enclosing them and forward at once, for which this shall be your authority."

"For the Directors,

"REGINALD CHESTERTON,

"Cashier."

Taking an old note-case which had a blotting-pad in its centre, Mr. Ferrett carefully dried the memorandum.

"There," said Ephraim, cheerfully. "I'll tell you what, Joe, there's not an expert in London that wouldn't swear that was my Thuggee friend's, Mr. Reginald's own proper fist."

"But who's to do it?" asked Joe.

"Who? Why, I myself, I said Joe. There's a saying, and a good one, if you want your business well done do it yourself. There's a note or coin worth carrying in those parcels when I've had the handling of 'em for two minutes; but of course they shan't feel as look lighter or snappier—oh, no, I'll put in the additional, and it shall be equal to what I take out in all but one, depend on't. And then, Joe, when they get my tissue paper and bronzed, Joe, and set the detectives on, why, then their first pitch, after the guard, will be that nice young gentleman, Mister Reginald Chesterton, cashier, ha! ha! And then the clever Mr. Newland Gilbert, who thinks he knows everybody's handwriting, customers and employes included, with half an eye, how he'll squint and get his magnifying glass, and examine and consult the other old fogies! And how they'll one and all be ready to swear it's Reginald Chesterton's own handwriting, though they'll say they can't believe it. Ha! ha! why, this will be a receipt fit full for his brutal attack on me, and some change out, eh, Joe?"

Joe could not find words to express his admiration of Mr. Ferrett's skill and fertility of invention.

"And now about the bullion, Joe. The fifth of January will be a full moon, but there's no knowing at this time of year if it will be clear. What time's the boat in that night?"

"At about 11.15 p.m., and the tidal train will start half an hour after its arrival. In town a little after at 2 a.m.—a capital time for London; as there can be no delivery until 9.30 a.m."

"In London then, you think best?"

"That'll leave to you, Mr. Ephraim. There are more eyes about us in London though. Perhaps the Dover chance is best after all. It's all left to me there, and there's ten times as much bustle with the luggage in town than at Dover. In fact I might go away and pretend to help for a minute or so while the changes are rung, and then say that must have been the time during which the trick was done."

"You're quite right, Joe; it shall be at Dover. I will be there with the cases."

After some further conversation the pair of rogues separately departed. Joe made his way to his lodgings in the upper part of a house in Tooley Street, where he quickly divested himself of his whiskers, wig, and comforter. Thence with his great-coat and hood boots were made into a parcel, rolled up in a square of American cloth, and thrust up on to a ledge in the chimney of his room, specially contrived for their concealment.

A wash got off the dark and dingy complexion, which a dirty face presented, and in ten minutes Joe looked fresh and smart in his guard's silver and lace, and was in the traffic-manager's office receiving his special way-bill and guard's parcels.

The Monday came and with it the registered bankers' parcel. No sooner had the clerk returned to his cab, and it had left the incline of the station, than a neatly dressed, elderly gentleman of almost clerical appearance alighted from a four-wheeler, and entered the office in a hurried manner.

"Young man," said he, to a booking-clerk, "I suppose I am in time to intercept our clerk with the Dover and Canterbury Branch parcels—I mean those from the Mercantile Chartered."

"He must have passed you, sir, on the incline; he's not been half a minute gone."

"How provoking! However, I have brought an authority from our cashier."

"We cannot part with the parcels, sir," said the young man, "however we might desire to oblige—"

"I don't want you to do so, my good young man; here's the enclosures which have been overlooked," placing a small expanding cowhide bag on the booking-office counter. "Just read that," and he handed the memorandum addressed to "the guard of the 12.30 train," which we have already heard of.

"Here, Johnson," called out the clerk.

The guard of the train made his appearance.

"Here's a gentleman from the bank," and he handed the memorandum signed Reginald Chesterton to the guard, "wants to add some enclosures to the parcels I've just booked. I've nothing more to do with them; here they are," and he delivered the two parcels to the man.

"Ay, ay," said the pretended messenger from the bank; "these are the parcels, I see. Shall I stop round?"

"Certainly," said the guard. "This way, sir."

Ephraim hastened through the office on to the departure platform.

"Is there any private place, my good friend, where I can fasten these up again?" said Ephraim; "these enclosures are of great value, and I wish to declare them."

"You can do that when you have put them in," said the guard, civilly, showing him into the room for deposit of lost property, as the most convenient place.

Ephraim quickly opened the packets, fumbled a little with his rather bulky enclosures, and, with a slight of hand quite sufficient for a conjuror in a fair, transferred the notes, bills, and cash to his cowhide bag aforesaid, substituting his own made-up packets in the covers.

Then, revealing the parcels with pink tape and some black wax as had brought for the purpose, he politely thanked the guard, and without delay transferred himself and his bag to the four-wheeler which had brought him from the west-end, over Westminster Bridge, along York Road, Stamford Street and Old Gravel Lane—for as yet Southwark Street was not—to London Bridge foot. This time the return journey was devoted from.

The cab, on reaching Blackman Street, was ordered to drive to Lombard Street. The man did so, and Ephraim, getting out at Bichein Lane, gave him his whole fare to the west and discharged him.

In Cornhill he took another cab, with which he drove to Hill's banking-house in Smithfield. At the door of that establishment, in the middle of the bustle of a cattle-market-day, he discharged his second cabby, and in ten minutes was in his well-known second-floor in Chick Lane, busied in the examination of the proceeds of his latest successful felony.

"You surprise me beyond expression," said Mr. Gilbert in a voice of deep concern. "I can hardly yet believe that there is not some mistake in identity in this case. The young man is far above the average in intelligence, his father, as you know, Mr. Anderson is the very soul of honour and integrity and, with the exception of an imprudence in accepting some bills for discount to escape a party embarrassment, which were stolen from him by a common knave, his conduct has been fairly steady of late. He is here now, in his office; would you like me to call him in and question him in your presence?"

"Certainly not," said Mr. Anderson, who was one of the directors; "I was only told this morning that this paragraph in the paper," he held a sporting newspaper in his hand, "related to a gentleman

in our employ. That he has already played in a public match with a professional for a stake of one hundred guineas. That his alias is the 'Camden Jonathan,' and that, if I doubt the accuracy of the information, I may satisfy myself by visiting a certain tavern, at a certain time, where a match, got up by a well-known West End horse dealer and a set of disreputable blacklegs, the confederates and companions of this young man, will be played, admission to the rooms being obtainable by the payment of one shilling."

"And when does this take place?" asked Mr. Gilbert.

"On Saturday next at six p.m., to allow time to play out before closing hour."

"I shall be there, you may depend upon it," said Mr. Gilbert; "my duty to his father, my school-fellow and oldest friend, demands it. I could, faint hope against probability, but fear it is but too true. Alas, how has this foolish, this wicked young man frustrated the fond hopes of his father, wrung the heart of his amiable sister, blasting his fairest prospects of a life of respectability and perhaps fortune; and all for the wretched indulgence of a passion for gaming! Mr. Anderson, I feel more than I can express for the young man's father; for him, if what you suspect and say is true, I have done with him for ever."

Mr. Gilbert never went to that tavern, nor was that match played, for reasons we shall presently disclose.

That gentleman had returned to his house in Torrington Square and had just sat down to a six o'clock dinner, when a more than usually strong pull at the "visitors' bell" somewhat startled the two old ladies and Mr. Gilbert himself.

"Bless me," said Miss Gilbert, "have you asked anybody to-day and forgotten it, William? There's a carriage drawn up, I heard it."

"No indeed, Martha; I have not," replied Mr. Gilbert.

The servant entered.

"Two gentlemen from the country," said Mary, "and they say they wish to speak to you immediately. I told them you had just sat down to dinner, but one of them gave me this card and said he was sure you would see them at once."

Mr. Gilbert looked at the card. It bore a well-known name.

"I will see him directly," said he, and rising from the table observed to his sisters:

"Excuse me a few minutes. I have a presentiment of some unpleasant tidings in relation to the bank. This is the manager of one of our Kentish branches."

And Mr. Gilbert left the room.

In the parlor he found a gentleman well known to him, who at once said:

"This is a detective, Friend Gilbert, Mr. Lynx, whom I have brought from Scotland Yard to aid me in the discovery of a robbery cleverly effected yesterday, at present it is not clear when or how. The parcels containing our remittances from London arrived in due course, but their contents had been abstracted, and a worthless packet of waste paper and bronze coins substituted, both in our parcel and that for Dover. The discovery was only made this day, after business opened, and I have hastened first to the London Bridge terminus, thence to Scotland Yard. I have been back to London Bridge. I find we can pursue the matter no farther until the return from Dover of the guard in charge, which will take place in about two hours from this time. As the bank is closed and the affair admits of no delay, I wish you to inform me of the contents of the missing parcels when they left your establishment."

"Most assuredly. This is a dreadful business, indeed, Mr. Dobson. The amount I know is large. The book containing the entries of remittances is kept by a Mr. Chesterton, of our county department. I have his address, but as I have a master key to the cases and safes and there is a general one in possession of the night watchman on the premises we will at once go down there and furnish such information to Mr. Lynx here as may lead to tracing the property. I will accompany you in a few minutes, Mr. Dobson."

And Mr. Gilbert left the room.

It was a dark, drizzling, foggy night, one of the miserable winter evenings of mist, sleet and mud, that make London streets doubly nasty and disagreeable.

Mr. Gilbert, having donned a greatcoat and scarf and possessed himself of the bright master-keys of the fireproof book-safes and receptacles of the papers of the establishment, and having also received a superabundance of cautions against taking cold, with a fortification of cherry brandy from his kindly sisters, the three drove off on their unpleasant mission—at least it was unpleasant to two of them.

The third, Mr. Lynx, thought it quite otherwise, as it promised to be a case worthy the exercise of his undoubted ingenuity and calculated to re-

dound to the fame and profit of the officer engaged in its unavailing.

The banking-house reached, the book sought was quickly found, and in half an hour a certified transcript of the items forwarded was in the possession of Mr. Lynx, and another in that of Mr. Dobson.

Mr. Lynx communicated his intention of seeing the guard of the train that night and being guided by circumstances as to whether he should take him into custody or not. But, at any rate, he said he would not lose sight of him, as, if concerned in the robbery, his movements might compromise him.

"However," added that astute gentleman, "the chance is that if he's guilty he won't come back into the lion's jaws, so I shall have to look after him across channel, where the notes, at any rate, will go, and where they're very likely to have been changed by this time, for it's clear this turn's been done by no novices or commoners."

The looks and fastenings having been again secured, Mr. Lynx further advised that Mr. Dobson should repair to some hotel, where he, Mr. Lynx, would see him at an early hour and report progress.

Mr. Gilbert would not hear of this. Mr. Dobson must be his guest for the night; and, this offer being accepted, Mr. Lynx bade them farewell at the door of the bank, and took his way for the London Bridge terminus to pursue his investigations.

The up train was punctual, and the guard was escorted by Mr. Lynx in presence of the superintendent of the railway company's police.

The honest fellow's story was plain and consistent.

He narrated the call of the booking-clerk, who handed over to him the parcels, and referred the banker's clerk to him.

He produced his way-bill, the register ticket, and the "memorandum" by which the poor fellow was duped and the daring robbery effected.

Mr. Lynx scrutinized the document narrowly. "Chesterton, Chesterton," said he, thoughtfully, "that's a name I know. If this is not a forgery then the robbery wasn't done by the person that brought it. What sort of a person was it that gave you this?"

"A gentleman with a reddish face, a white head of hair, a white cravat, and I should say about fifty. A regular city clerk like, sort o' man you'd trust with anything."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Lynx. "I never saw that man yet. Well, Wilson—if that's your name—I wish you well through this. At present I'm thinking you'd better rub up your memory as to when you lost sight of the parcels after this old gentleman had put the extra cash into the inside of them."

The poor fellow assented, with all the energy of truth, that, except on the authority of that letter, he had never parted with, or lost sight of the parcels until he delivered them at their respective destinations.

"Why, as far as appearances at present go," said Mr. Lynx, "this document, supposing it genuine, won't help us a bit, unless we suppose the confidential clerk sent by Mr. Chesterton is a regular thief. If it is a forgery that alters the case; then we must hunt up this elderly city gentleman who looks fit to be trusted with anything. I think, Mr. Inspector, that this man," and Mr. Lynx winked aside at the inspector, "as he's been many hours on duty, may as well be allowed to go home."

"Thank you kindly," said the poor fellow, who, though perfectly innocent, had been in a cold perspiration during the whole inquiry, "thank you kindly. I'm sure I'm obliged to you, for if my old woman only heard of this affair—and not see me at home—it might be the death of her. Thank you!"

And he hurried from the office to the van in the baggage yard.

Mr. Lynx was quickly after him, and, having put a watch on his movements, returned to the inspector.

Then he deposited the fatal "memorandum" in his letter-case, and made a note of the examination of the guard.

Mr. Lynx thereafter made his way to Scotland Yard, and there handed in a very brief sketch of the nature of the robbery, the information he had received, and the inquiry he was at that moment engaged in following up.

What that inquiry led to shall be disclosed in the next chapter.

(To be continued.)

RELICS OF PETER THE GREAT.—A curious circumstance is recently reported, namely, the discovery in a house in Great Peter Street of a sideboard, a bookcase, and an iron chest which were made by Peter the Great when he was living as a workman in this country. The "London Gazette" of February, 1698, describes these articles, which

are said to have remained where the Czar left them, and as he left them, since that time. Latterly they have been considered rather in the light of lumber; but having been seen by M. Stanislaus, a Pole, they have now become the property of a Russian nobleman, Gregoire Tcherikoff, who intends presenting them to the Emperor of Russia, in order they may be placed among other relics of Peter the Great at Moscow.

A MISER'S DILEMMA.

JOSEPH SNOODGRASS laid down the slate on which he had set down the sum total of his kitchen expenses for the last year. He had multiplied the sum by two, and gazed long and thoughtfully at the result. Soon he arose from the table, on which were the remains of a coarse breakfast. Taking the bread and a pitcher of milk in his hands he deposited them in the cupboard murmuring:

"I'll do it, just as sure as I'm the richest man in Oakland. Victuals for two will cost as much again as for one, allowing the same quantity for each; but it seems to me a woman ought to live on less than a man. But who under the sun shall I marry?"

Here Mr. Snodgrass scratched his head vigorously, evidently perplexed.

"She must be as saving as I am, she must be satisfied with two meals a day, and plain food must be necessary to her digestive organs as it is to mine. She must not only be able, but willing to do her own work, besides taking in enough to keep herself in winter shoes (in summer she can go barefoot) and pay the grocer's bills. Ha! I have an idea. I'll go into the country. Farmers' girls are good for something besides dressing up, and I know it will be easy enough to find such an one as I want."

Thus soliloquizing, Jacob dressed himself in his best. His coat was of blue cloth, short-waisted and swallow-tailed, and ornamented with huge brass buttons. His vest was of yellowish velvet, and reached several inches below the waist of his coat.

To add to the grotesqueness of his appearance, Jacob tied a faded scarlet ribbon in his button-hole, and attached a party-coloured one with a long streamer to his straw hat.

Our hero imagined that the occasion demanded these little additions to his toilet, but somehow, when he came to look in the glass, he seemed to think the ribbon had driven all the colour from his face, so, to make amends for this, a quantity of red ink was daubed on his cheeks, and then Jacob pronounced himself looking ten years younger than he was before.

Certainly no one would take him to be over forty — so the ancient bachelor told himself as he sallied forth in quest of a wife.

He procured his neighbour's superannuated horse, for whose services he agreed to furnish the animal with a dinner.

Many a merry dame that day tittered audibly while peering from behind curtains and doors at the droll old man who talked with their mothers on various subjects and who invariably asked each matron if she had a marriageable daughter for whose industry and frugality she could vouch.

This question was always received with a wondering smile and a decided answer in the negative, until Jacob began to despair of success.

At length he called on Mrs. Draper, a little woman who had no daughters. The lady inspired Jacob with confidence. She was a sympathetic little body, and just then Jacob felt the need of sympathy, so he told her what hopes and desires had brought him from home. He told her precisely what sort of wife he wanted, and then he hitched his chair a little nearer hers, looked around to make sure that there were no girls eavesdropping again, and told her the story of his first and only love.

He had loved a pretty girl years before, he said, but, fortunately, he had discovered her extravagant habits and discarded her. He had seen her buy an orange, at a time when that fruit was high, from a ragged beggar and then actually refuse her change. Thus she lost her chance of becoming Mrs. Snodgrass.

Jacob related these particulars, he informed Mrs. Draper, that she might be able to advise him.

"Could she recommend a suitable person to his notice?"

Mrs. Draper smiled graciously and told Jacob that she could recommend a youngish lady of her acquaintance who she was sure would not object to a union with so worthy a man as Mr. Snodgrass was known to be. The lady's name was Matilda Hardscrabble, and Mrs. Draper pointed across the fields to a little brown wooden house, where Matilda resided with her mother.

Jacob thanked Mrs. Draper for her kindly interest in his welfare and departed.

His horse was tired and hungry, and he rode slowly towards the brown house, all unconscious of the swift-footed little messenger hastening by a short cut across the fields to the same place.

Mrs. Hardscrabble was alone when Jacob entered. She did not rise, but politely asked him to be seated. Jacob dropped clumsily into the nearest chair, and in doing so crushed a stylish hat belonging to Matilda. The widow was the opposite of Mrs. Draper, and talked very little, and Jacob grew fidgety and blushed like a school-girl. He fanned himself vigorously, first with his coloured handkerchief, and then with his hat. He longed to ask for Miss Matilda, but dared not. Soon, however, he was relieved by that lady's appearance. She was tall and raw-boned, sallow-complexioned, and instead of being youngish, as Mrs. Draper said, she was decidedly oldish. But Jacob cared little for either youth or beauty. A faculty to make, or at least to save money was all he required, and Matilda's garments showed plainly that she held a just estimate of the value of money. Her dress was faded, and literally covered with patches. Her head, instead of being adorned with an expensive coil of false hair, was encumbered only by the weight of its own, which was really not an encumbrance, since all the hair on her head was twisted into a knot no larger than a baby's fist.

Jacob was fully satisfied Matilda would make just the wife for him. After a while he arose to go, and was about to ask Matilda to walk down to the gate with him that he might propose to her, when he discovered the flattened hat. He picked it up and held it at arm's length.

"Gracious goodness! Did I do that? What in the world do you call the thing, anyhow? Not a bonnet surely. Yes, sure enough it is, and if here isn't a stuffed bird perched on the front and ribbons enough to start a milliner's-shop with. I always set folks who wear feathers and ribbons down for spendthrifts."

Mrs. Hardscrabble smiled and glanced meaningly at Jacob's ribbons.

"I put these on just for the notion of it. It isn't the snary but the cost that I object to."

"That hat cost ten shillings, did you say?" exclaimed Mrs. Hardscrabble, in spite of Matilda's grimaces. "Mersey me, Mr. Snodgrass, it was a sovereign, and cheap at that."

Jacob threw up his hands in horror. He offered no apology for the mischief he had done, but determined if possible to find out which of the ladies owned the hat. So turning to Matilda, who all the while plied her knitting-needle as though her best hat were not in ruins, he asked:

"Do you wear such follies as this, madam?"

To which Matilda replied, unhesitatingly:

"No, I never did, and never shall wear such a hat as that," and then she added to herself:

"I didn't tell a fib. It isn't fit now to wear to the barn."

Matilda's answer did not quite satisfy her miserly wooer, and he walked down to the gate alone.

Jacob went home, fed his neighbour's horse with a quart of potatoes, changed his clothing, and sat down to reflect.

At length he hit upon a plan by which he could satisfy himself whether or not Matilda were worthy to become Mrs. Snodgrass.

His plan, which he imagined an original one, was to disguise himself as a labourer, get employed by the Widow Hardscrabble, and watch her daughter. Accordingly the next morning found him once more at the little brown house, where he solicited a job in a poorly feigned Irish brogue. The widow was on the point of turning him away when the daughter called to her from the next room. She returned, and engaged Jacob to saw wood in the shed which adjoined the kitchen.

Jacob could have wished for nothing better. He went to work with a will, keeping as close to the kitchen door as possible.

In a short time Matilda, much to the surprise of the little maid-of-all-work, left her novel-reading on the lounge and came in her patched dress to the kitchen, where she worked industriously all the forenoon, one moment scolding the girl because a crust was wasted, the next charging her not to put a grain above the given quantity of sugar in the custard, and again finding fault because a whole teaspoonful of egg was thrown away in the shells.

Jacob was delighted. All his doubts of Matilda, which had sprung up from the crumpled hat, were removed.

At noon he received his pay and departed, only to return the next day to offer his hand and fortune to the only woman he had ever found who was worthy of them.

His offer was accepted, and an early day made Matilda Hardscrabble Mrs. Jacob Snodgrass.

Immediately after the wedding Jacob took his wife home, where he made her acquainted with his

nousekeeping arrangements. He stated to a penny what his table supplies cost him yearly, and told her "he was willing to allow her as much as he ate himself, though a woman ought to keep up on less than a man."

Matilda bowed tamely, and Jacob congratulated himself on his good fortune in getting such a treasure of a wife.

The next day Jacob went away, after giving his wife permission to buy and roast two pounds of beef for dinner in honour of their happy union.

No sooner was her husband out of sight than Matilda dressed herself and went out. She visited an office, where she engaged the services of two robust girls, who received orders to be at her house at twelve o'clock. From thence she went to a house-furnishing establishment, where she selected goods to the value of several hundred pounds. Dry goods merchants and grocers were also extensively patronized, after which Mrs. Snodgrass, with an audible "I'll show him what's what," called a cab and was taken home.

When the bridegroom returned he walked up and down past his house several times, wondering whether he were lost or his mind wandering. He was in the right street surely, but where was his house, with its one furnished room and closed-up windows. He saw one which might have been his, only the shutters were thrown back and through the wide-open windows he could see sturdy men and red-faced girls bustling about, adjusting costly furniture as it was carried in from the numerous drays which almost blocked up the street.

Jacob was turning away completely bewildered when he heard a familiar voice calling:

"For pity's sake, Jacob, come into the house! People will take you for a lunatic if you keep staring about in that fashion. I meant to have had everything in apple-pie order before you got back to give you a pleasant surprise. However, the dining-room is put to rights and Bridget is setting the table for dinner. So come in."

Talking in this cool manner, Matilda led the way to the dining-room, Jacob following, too utterly astounded and scared to speak or even think clearly. But when a dinner fit for a prince was brought in by a servant his parched tongue found a feeble utterance.

"Woman, what—what—"

"Jacob, what?" repeated Matilda, laughing.

"What have you done?"

"Fie, Jacob! the work isn't half done yet. It isn't worth speaking about. But after the servants get things in order I shall take pleasure in showing you over the house. Come now—the dinner is getting cold."

Jacob took a seat at the table, but the first mouthful he attempted to swallow choked him so that the trial was not repeated.

His lips were compressed, and his usually tawny skin white from passion. His wife was eating her dinner calmly and apparently with great satisfaction.

The way the expensive viands disappeared from her plate was enough to loosen the tongue of a dumb man, and Jacob found the use of his.

"Matilda Snodgrass, either you're acting unnaturally now or you were the other day when the Irishman sawed wood for your mother, and you ate only a potato and a piece of bread for your dinner."

"Irishman indeed!" exclaimed Matilda. "Just as though I didn't see through your dimmy disguise at once, Jacob Snodgrass."

"Ah, you did, eh? Well, that dress don't look much like the one you had on the first time I saw you," pursued Mr. Snodgrass, with vehemence.

"Well, no. But then you see that was an old one of mother's. Mrs. Draper sent word that you were coming, and what you were coming for, so I dressed myself to receive you, just as any lady should do who expects a visitor."

And with this Mrs. Snodgrass gave vent to a triumphant peal of laughter.

Jacob raged and stormed, and declared that not a shilling of his money should go to support such extravagance.

But the bills were paid, nevertheless, when sent in, and many more also, until Jacob gave up going abroad at all, but stayed at home to watch his wife.

He followed her wherever she went, but somehow she managed to get everything she wanted, and Jacob's purse grew lighter every day.

As for himself he fell away to a mere skeleton, and finally died, the most wretched of all the richest men in Oakland.

On jury trials, two centuries ago, it was dangerous for jurors to differ from the presiding judge. In England it was not uncommon for the judge to punish jurymen for not following his directions.

When Penn (the Quaker) and Meade were tried before a jury for preaching in the streets, they (the jury) were sent back three times for not finding the prisoners guilty, and at last were fined for their obstinacy. The fines not being forthcoming, they were confined in Newgate. A writ of habeas corpus soon opened the prison doors, and the case was referred to a full bench of twelve judges, who pronounced the fining and imprisonment to be contrary to law. The jurymen subsequently obtained exemplary damages for false imprisonment.

A DARK DAY.

CHAPTER II.

THE opera was the "Traviata"—saddest of operas, loveliest of music—but Madge saw nothing but the new singer, heard nothing but her lovely voice, and soon ceased to hear or see even that, for her excited glances presently perceived Harvey, who had just entered, and whose eyes never moved from the beautiful singer except to follow her longingly, lovingly, when she left the stage.

Poor little Madge! Her heart died within her, for never—no, not even in their honeymoon—had her husband's gaze rested on her with the rapt adoring look that now followed this strange woman's every movement.

She saw that Harry threw the prima donna an exquisite bouquet of violets and white roses, and she saw the look that passed between them when the beautiful woman raised the flowers and almost pressed them to her bosom; in the next scene she wore on her fair, round arm the bracelet—Madge's expected gift—and when the poor little wife saw this proof of how another woman had been preferred before her a low cry of anguish burst from her pale lips, and she pressed her trembling hands convulsively on her heart. Oh! the pain that seemed to tear it asunder—if she could die! if she could die!

She remembered, with almost a throb of joy, how a great physician had once told her when she was a young girl that she must beware of sudden shocks of pain or surprise, because of an incipient heart disease which yet might kill her at a moment's notice.

Mrs. Godfrey took Madge home, and with unwonted kindness commended her to the care of her maid, and a few womanly tears softened her flashing eyes at sight of the misery she had helped to inflict.

When Harvey Ellsworth came home his wife seemed to be asleep. She spoke no word to him, nor did her quivering lips even utter one reproach. Once she said to herself:

"I will not believe that he has ceased to love me—no, not till his own lips have said it. To-morrow is the anniversary of our wedding-day—he will remember it—he will come back to me—once more he will be all my own."

The day opened with a glorious morning—so bright, so fresh that Madge accepted it as an omen of returning joy, and when Harvey took her face between his hands and kissed her brow, saying "Many happy returns of the day, little woman!" the joyous colour rushed over her neck and brow, and she thought that since her wedding morning she had not been so glad.

Harvey didn't say that he would return early, but Madge felt certain that he would, and she went about the house humming gaily to herself and thinking what she could do to show Harvey that she had never really doubted him, and that she was, as ever, his own happy, trusting wife. She remembered several little commissions she had promised to execute for him weeks before, and in particular a promise she had made to sort and classify a certain drawer full of papers, letters, scraps, etc., and which in the bitter turmoil of the past few weeks she had quite forgotten.

Madge resolved to rectify this neglect at once and went to the drawer. It was locked. Madge searched and found the missing key, and in another moment the drawer was open and the contents in her lap. She smiled over Harvey's untidiness and proceeded, with her deft little fingers, to bring order out of chaos.

At the very bottom of the drawer she found a little perfumed packet, tied with a silken string, whose tenderly-cared-for appearance awakened her curiosity—it was such a contrast to its surroundings. She untied the ribbon and examined the contents.

First, a long curl of dark, waving hair, which fell from her fingers as if its touch burnt her; next, some faded flowers—a tea-rose, a tiny bunch of violets, a knot of forget-me-nots. They were all faded, but every leaf was sacredly preserved. A card photograph—Madge knew too well the face she would see

there, and yet she shivered to the very marrow of her bones because she knew so well—but look she must, if the sight killed her.

It was a glorious face. The light of its beauty, which would once have given her delight, now sickened her to look upon, but she spared herself no pang.

Long and stealthily she gazed on the perfect features the deep, liquid eyes, the sweet voluptuous mouth; and she looked up at her own face reflected in the glass about her. A very pretty face—a fair infantile blonde Madge was, with soft, deep blue eyes, sunny hair, and a dimpled, baby chin; but now it was blanched to the hue of marble; the eyes seemed dead, the lips were pallid clay, and every feature was sharpened with acute agony. She could not bear to look upon herself; and too well she knew that even at her best her prettiness had no chance against the rich beauty of this dark-browed woman. She laid the picture softly back, face downward, and placed the flowers and the curling hair upon it.

"But yet he may love me still!" panted the sore heart within the weary breast. "Beautiful as she is I am his wife. Oh, he cannot have quite forgotten that."

There is one thing more that had lain next the picture—a folded slip of paper, covered with Harvey's writing. Madge read it. It was a passionate outpouring of love. He told this woman all his heart—that he adored her—that the world held nothing for him apart from her—that all which had pleased his eye, his heart, had grown hateful to him since he beheld her—that life without her was a torture, and his only hope of happiness to die at her feet—to die looking into her wondrous face, and listening to the fatal melody of her voice.

Madge read every word—every word was burning into her brain. Calmly, with death-cold hands, she sorted and arranged every article in the drawer, and on the top she placed the picture, the faded flowers and the curl of hair; only the written words she kept just as her hand had closed upon the paper when she finished reading it. All day long she held it in the same grasp—sometimes it was clenched a little closer when she pressed her hand against the throbbing, agonized heart, that was breaking surely, but to Madge, oh! so slowly.

Harvey didn't come home to dinner that day. Madge kept her room, telling the servants she was too ill to dine.

The anniversary of her wedding-day!—but she no longer remembered that. The hours dragged slowly on—nine, ten, eleven. Madge no longer counted them.

A stupor fell upon her, and a deep, convulsive sobbing shook her slender form, till all the bed beneath her shook with her anguish. But at last the sounds died away. She was very still, perhaps she slept.

Just at that moment Harvey Ellsworth came rapidly walking along the street that led to his own house, and his face was dark and moody, his soul was filled with self-contempt and rage, as much against himself as against the woman who had laughed at him.

"Sol!" he thought, with a diabolical laugh and sneer, "I am dismissed. And what else did I expect—that this siren would give up the world for me, and take my heart for the plaything of even a few months? Heaven forgive me! What a brute I have been! My little Madge—my own, sweet, darling little girl! But I will make it up to you, my only little love—yes, if I lay down my life to do it!"

Gently and with noiseless steps, Harvey entered, and found his way to his room. It was now long past midnight, but the light burned clear and steady, falling full on his wife's figure where she lay, still undressed, upon the bed.

"My darling! She was sitting up for me, villain that I am, and she has fallen asleep, overpowered by weariness!"

Harvey approached gently, carefully, and stooped over her.

"How still she is, and how white! My poor little pet! Madge, my darling, wake and speak to me!" He took her hand, and its chill touch sent a shiver of fear to his heart. "Madge! Madge, my darling—wake—speak to me!"

He caught up the slight form and pressed it to his heart; he kissed the cold face; but it was the face of the dead. And with a shriek that waked the whole house and brought the inmates trembling to his side Harvey realized the full measure of his guilt.

His guilt was what the world calls nothing, or smiles at even when worse; but poison had not been more fatal to Madge. At last Harvey observed the clenched hand; and when at length he unclosed the fingers, and drew forth the folded paper, he knew the very weapon that had done the deed. Madge was more than avenged and those cruel words will

the man who wrote them till the hand which penned them is returned to earth. C. E.

WIVES.

Of the different relationships woman is called upon by nature to bear, both toward her own and the opposite sex, perhaps there is none in which she stands so prominent as that of a wife. As a daughter, she sustains an interesting character, and beautiful is it to behold her fulfilling the filial duties with reverence and love. As a sister, many of the most pleasing and gentle traits may be developed. As a mother, she is placed in a situation of the utmost importance, and where new and delightful feelings are awakened into existence. But as a wife she is most regarded by the world, and for that character all the energies of her nature appear to be brought into action.

At her creation the duties of a wife were the first she was called upon to fulfil, and eloquent is the description our master-poet has given of her in that relationship—where Scripture is silent, he, with a conscience, has portrayed her in all the fulness of pristine purity, and even after her fall touchingly beautiful is the representation of her position and willingness to bear the whole weight of her offended Maker's ire.

In the situation of wife all the great and enabling virtues, as well as all the gentle and tender affections which pertain to the female character, may be exhibited. The first and most prominent is her faithfulness; many are the instances history and biography record, but there are many which none but a circumstanced few are acquainted with, where unostentatious but unconquerable devotion to its object meet alone the reward it seeks. Woman is generally esteemed timid and retiring; and as such she lays the greatest claim upon man; as such in the ordinary affairs of life she is in her most attractive character, but there are situations where she puts on the noble courage of the lion, instead of the gentleness of the lamb, and it is usually brought into exercise by the strength of her affection as a wife. Frequently she is seen to bear with surprising magnanimity the distresses and difficulties which may overwhelm her partner in them. Frequently she is known to stem the rough torrent of adversity for his sake, when all the world beside may have forgotten him. Yes, in the midst of his deepest despair she is to be seen whispering peace and consolation, and shedding a halo around the dark chaos of his soul.

But the milder and passive virtues are more commonly exhibited, and for these every hour in the day must give scope. The variety of little disappointments and vexations which of necessity come (to man more especially, from his greater intercourse with the world) not unusually renders the temper somewhat irritable, but it is the duty and pleasure of the amiable and affectionate wife to endeavour to soften the irritability by sweetness and forbearance, by showing her willingness to promote his happiness however the world may frown—her tenderness and affection unchanged however other friends may desert—she will, by self-denial, seek to advance his pleasure, by candour dispel all doubts that might darken his confidence, and by generosity of thought and word and deed prove her every interest is swallowed up in his.

By many our picture of woman's devotedness may be deemed too highly-coloured, but we have seen her, in the character of wife, all that we have described; we have seen her trying to smile away the distresses of him to whom her heart and life was devoted, and when that has failed, we have seen her answer only by a tear, a silent, eloquent tear, not intended as a reproach, but which has effected what all her smiles may have failed to accomplish; we have seen her, by the exercise of moral courage, bearing all the sterner duties, and shaking off the retiring timidity of her nature, to supply his want of power; we have seen her denying herself all the luxuries, comforts—nay, almost necessities of life—to promote his pleasure and well-being; we have seen her beside his couch in the hour of sickness, enduring fatigue with uncomplaining patience. Yes, all this and far more we have seen wrought from the pure essence of woman's love.

In the breast of that woman where vanity is the leading characteristic (and unhappily the modern system of female education too often fosters this disgusting evil) the virtues such as we have described cannot be expected to dwell. She who, either as a maiden or wife, pants for admiration, and to gain it will wound the feelings or ruin the peace of another, is altogether incapable of the generous sentiment which alone deserves the name of love. Avarice is a still more odious inhabitant; the bosom of her who cherishes it must be totally devoid of those soft affections we usually look for in her sex, and she reaps the reward she merits when she sacrifices her principles and feelings by an union of interest, the gold she has so dearly pur-

chased fails to procure the happiness she seeks and her heart becomes a chaos of evil passions and disappointed hopes.

How delightful it is to witness an aged couple, who have weathered life's storms hand-in-hand and smiled on each other amid them, even as in its sunshine, whose pleasure in each other's society does not decrease because time has furrowed their brows and divested them of the strength and beauty of youth—to such a pair the past affords a fund of exquisite joy, as it presents through memory's glass their early loves, and if religion open to their views the prospect of reunion after death in a world where separation is not known, sweet and easy must be their departure, and no cause have they to regret that life's day is on the decline. W. P.

FRIENDSHIP.

FRIENDSHIP of the noblest type is love, refined of its dross, clarified and etherealized; it is unselfish, constant, self-forgetting. In its devotion it disdains itself, and in calamity it is as inflexible as adamant.

The counsel of the old-fashioned Bible in regard to friendship has never been transcended by any modern philosophy—"A man that hath friends must show himself friendly"—and had the Scriptures been compiled in the age of woman there would, doubtless, have been given many a substantial hint as to her on the same subject.

In the matter of shaping or moulding friendships there is much unnecessary planning or plotting. There is a mysterious, indelible drawing that enters into this matter, defiant alike of preconceived purpose and proffered service.

Soul answers to soul with an emphasis not to be misunderstood, and not easily resisted. Like the union of different chemical elements, with a kind of instinct of fitness they combine, because immutable laws so order it.

There is an inspiration in it, a sort of celestial reason. There is no critical analysis about it; the soul speaks, and it is done; the spirit commands, and it stands fast.

THE USURER'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER IV.

THAT night deeper gloom than ordinary pervaded the usurer's household. He had sustained various losses of late, and though much musing the policy of wedding his daughter and heiress to the scion of a family of expensive habits, he nevertheless saw no retreat.

One source of anxiety had been hurried upon another in fearful succession and with accumulated power.

After his frugal supper he had reclined for some time in silence in his old arm-chair. An unusual heaviness of heart was his as he noted the red, tear-swollen eyes of his daughter, a fresh line of care seemed furrowed on his own lofty forehead as he looked on the drooping girl. He sighed:

"Constance, come here, my daughter."

Silently and calmly did the beautiful and noble girl approach her father.

"Constance, in your own deep and hopeless trouble you have shown yourself willing to save me. Heaven knows I would spare you this sacrifice, for such I see it is, but unless I can by this alliance save the sinking credit of the firm Mr. Poydras will not endorse his nephew's paper farther, and I shall be ruined. Fires and failures among other houses have occurred in rapid succession. You can understand it all, Constance."

"I grieve very deeply for your sake, father."

At this moment a rapping at the front door of the house was followed by Dick ushering Laurent Lawrence into the room.

"Perhaps you do not wish to remain?" the old man asked, noting the additional pallor that overspread his daughter's face as she heard the approaching footsteps.

But in a tone of calm decision that surprised him she replied, as she took a seat:

"It is as well to know the worst at once."

"Good evening, Mr. Lamb; good evening, Miss Delpeche," said Laurent, his habitual politeness modified by noting the serious countenances of both father and daughter.

Constance returned his salutation by a formal inclination, while the usurer offered him the only unoccupied chair in the room.

He took it; yet no one seemed able to break the silence, while he vain twirled his watch-key and seal, endeavouring to assume the appearance of his usual careless manner.

An angry expression flitted for a moment over the handsome face of the young man, but it speedily

passed, and rising, with a sudden resolve that startled his companions, he approached Constance and took her hand.

"Miss Delpeche, I presume Mr. Lamb has acquainted you with the reasons that at the present crisis of my father's affairs render it necessary that some decided and immediate step should be taken to gain my uncle's confidence, the chief endorser of the firm. I do not speak of my own wishes—you know them already."

"I presume you came to speak of the business arrangement you have put forth in its proper mercantile bearing, and I remained to say that I would no longer be a hindrance."

And, coldly bending her head, she left the room. Though calm and dignified and self-possessed while she remained below, yet no sooner was she in her own room than, sinking helplessly down by the side of her bed, she poured forth her heart's sad moans in sobs and tears, more bitter for being unavailing.

"And he has gone"—her thoughts were all with Ingersoll—"gone for ever! gone, never to know how dearly, faithfully I have loved him! Gone, thinking me false, carrying no memory in his faithful, manly heart of me, save what he will deem my fickleness. Oh, Father in Heaven! stretch forth Thine arm to lift my soul from this fearful gloom! Oh, stretch it forth to save, to guard, to sustain, that I fall not, faint not, but be strong to bear. Oh, teach me the stern ways of duty! let me humbly, patiently walk therein, till, by sorrow tried and purified, my earthly spirit may return unswayed whence it came. Oh, grant, I pray in words unworthy Thee, that ere my spirit parts—ere clouded by death's shadow—he so truly loved may then believe me true! Oh, gladly I'll join the shadowy throng whenever summoned hence. Till then, oh, lead me firm through duty's path till life's last sands have run!"

The sacrifice was consummated. They were married and they went abroad, where they remained two years.

Reader, have you ever loved? Has the heart-lighted sunshine of life awakened in your heart all that forms the poetry of existence?

Has the heart germ of your nature expanded into the sweet-breathed blossom, and the life fountain of your soul been stirred, round which angels swopt their wings?

And then, has a devastating spirit flapped its dark pall above until darkness and ruin alone remained?

Then, you can account for the cold, unbending reserve, the pale, thoughtful brow, and smile devoid of gladness of that fair young bride.

If you are a man, and your haughty soul, like the plume on a warrior's crest, though never stooping its pride or bending to a foe, has trembled, vibrating before the music whisper of one loved voice—then you can understand how the calm, cold unapproachable beauty was yet gentle, timid, tearful, when alone.

Or, are you a woman, and have clothed some favoured specimen of humanity with a unreal perfection, who has borne your dreaming spirit company in a sort of charmed trance, upheld by the ethereal hopes that fed your prayerful existence, that sweetly softened by the influences falling pure and silently as dew from heaven upon your life's gushing fountain, blending its individuality with yours—becoming part of yourself—then, then you know the aching, desolate void, the hopeless indifference to all things, with which Constance wedded and went abroad.

CHAPTER V.

THEY passed the winter in Paris, enjoying many privileges that do not often fall to the lot of strangers.

A letter from a gentleman to young Lawrence introduced him and his beautiful bride at once into the circle they most wished to frequent during their stay—that which, surrounding the throne, had all of grandeur, of name and nobility, that could render the appendages of rank imposing.

They met frequently with Lamartine and Chateaubriand, Balzac and Dumas, Paul de Kock and Madame Duvivier (George Sand).

The latter mixed freely in all circles, the revolutionists worshipping at the shrine of the bold principles she so dauntlessly avowed, while the aristocrats bowed at that of her genius. Duchesses and countesses flattered round them, their gorgeous bedighting outshone by the whiteness of their smiles, and difficult would it have been to have told by the bland smile and gracious manner in that gay assemblage what was passing in the mind within.

Thoroughly and successfully educated in the higher branches of physiological deception, the Parisian countenance is hard to understand, and Lawrence and Constance each viewed all they met

through their very different educational advantages. His fascinated sense was never weary of the contemplation of grandeur—she was fatigued, hurt, sick with the hypocrisy she met.

The king appeared more honest than any of his subjects, moving among them with a kingly dignity in his bearing as he paced the saloons, addressing all with an affability and an appropriateness that could not fail to impress strangers with admiration.

Brought up in the school of adversity, his had been the tutelage of events, and their teaching had shown him the advantage of holding an assured position as a man as well as a king. Trained to self-knowledge and self-command, his mind, superior by nature and education to those of all the then sovereigns of Europe, habituated to active business habits, Constance looked on the French king as the greatest monarch of the day.

The revolution had just thrown open the royal library and Louvre to all classes, and much it annoyed the aristocratic Laurence that he was elbowed alike in either place by prince and pedlar, sailor, magistrate and mendicant. What cared he that the taste of the people would be improved thereby, since it had never entered his thoughtless head that the taste and morals of a people are closely allied?—a fact that the unthinking never suppose; while Constance, though disregarding the pomp of the court, rejoiced that the masses might receive gratification and improvement from being thus permitted the contemplation of these masterpieces of art.

For the court magnificence she had no relish, but with her calm, earnest gaze fixed on the crowded choir where Louis Philippe sat while the brilliant throng passed by, her thoughts flew back to Rome's palmy days when the equites passed in review before the dictator.

Viewing Louis Philippe with this distinction—that were he stripped of all his badges, his crown forfeited, his titles withdrawn, he would still as a private citizen hold a position from his cultivated intellect more to be envied than the gloss and stinal appendages of royalty, she noticed that the most restless spirits that approached his calm eye were tamed, and tendered their respectful homage, not so much as subjects to a king, but as inferior natures submitting to a higher order of intelligence.

A gay winter was that spent in Paris by our business-abhorring Laurence, who mingled freely in all its excitements and many of its vices—spending large sums in the gambling saloons, and, unless repressed by him, even larger at the card-parties succeeding the petites coquers of opera singers, ballet supernumeraries, and artists of all grades. Constance was taken under the especial wing of a beautiful Englishwoman, who, born in England, was educated in a French convent, and at that time the wife of a French general.

From her, Constance's pure nature was shocked to learn that the artificial hauteur of a host of these haughty dames was but assumed to conceal a corruption of morals that would have astonished the more natural beauties of other European courts. The more Constance saw of courtly magnificence and splendour the more thankful did she feel for being independent of wearying her senses in its endless round.

True, she saw around her nightly the men who had indirectly governed Europe for half a century, observed the traces of care on their furrowed brows, the snows of time on their hoary crowns.

Yet these men, so dreaded in the council's debates, who held a nation's destiny in their keeping, laughed and chatted familiarly with all around as though a single care had never vibrated along the discordant strings of their jarring, tuneless, time-hardened hearts; and away she turned sick at heart. Strange it was to see men, the counterparts of Mazarin and Talleyrand, who, whatever measure of duplicity they may have had between them else, yet with our common consent admitting the cold and distant Constance to be the loveliest where all were lovely. Stranger yet, to see her turn from the syron song of adulation with a sigh!

Yes, strange it was to see men with the frost of sixty winters on their weather-beaten brows—men, who had passed their long lives of wealth and power in building up bulwarks to fence a throne, beating off in their desperate every shadow of mortality—bending lowly before the usurer's daughter.

Spring had come, and Constance, sad and heart-weary, used to spend much of her time in solitude, seeking but little of her husband, who gave his time now entirely up to engagements of a private and personal nature. While the other arcades of Paris are a constant scene of hurry and excitement, that of Vendôme, terminating at one extremity in the Rue Vendôme, at the other in the Boulevard du Temple, is unfrequented, a very oasis of quiet and seclusion in a wilderness of noise and confusion, a solitude amid the seething struggle of this vast city. No

place could be more favourable for an appointment, since the person sought might be discovered at a glance within the arcade, and so matter how long one stayed or whom they met no one noticed it. Here it was that Laurence Lawrence used to meet the sorrow-faced, slipshod favorite of the ballet, who at that time dared not invite our hero to her hotel.

Nor was Constance long ignorant of this humiliating fact. She had one morning accompanied the wife of General Lagrange in a drive to the square dividing the Tuilleries from the Champs Elysees, extending in a broad avenue between the palace and the Arc de l'Etoile, driving slowly along. While madame exchanged smiles and bows of recognition with all that passed, Constance drew back into the opposite corner, looking out upon the broad *Sénes*, spanned by its noble arches, its sides gemmed with models of architectural magnificence, the Chamber of Deputies, the Palais Bourbon, and looming up in stately grandeur above all, the gilded dome of the Invalides. To Constance it was a spot rife with interest, a place for painter, poet, moralist, whether viewing it as a centre of unrivalled prospects of all that was grand, or beautiful, or interesting, or, as it truly was, unequalled in the history of nations for its scenes of revolting atrocity, no spot on earth ever having been more foully polluted with stains of human blood than that she now looked out upon—the Place Louis XV.

As they passed along the broad avenue to the Champs Elysees a carriage rolled rapidly by, but not so fast as to prevent Constance from seeing her husband seated by the side of a highly coloured, overdressed woman. Drawing instinctively farther back into the corner of the carriage, she drew the folds of her veil closer, concealing her face from the scrutiny of those who rode by its side chatting with madame, who suddenly asked, "Who were those who just passed?" seeing a peculiar smile lighting up the visages as well as the telegraphic glance that passed between two of her escorts at the recognition.

Not perceiving Constance in the corner, where she sat cowering under the folds of her veil, trembling with a shivering sense of dread of their remark, the one addressed said:

"Madame refers to that which drove so rapidly past? Leontine Duval, taking an airing with that young Englishman we meet so frequently," adding, "Who by the way, is a lucky fellow, for in addition to madame being a very vision of loveliness, she is said to be an heiress of magnitude."

"To whom do you allude?" asked the unsuspecting Madame Lagrange.

"To Mr. Laurence, whom Mademoiselle Leontine says is indebted to his wife for the very boots he wears."

CHAPTER VI.

A MONTH later, his arm in a sling, having been wounded in a duel by the Englishman who especially appropriated the damoiseau, Laurence, angry with himself at the turn affairs had taken, determined on visiting Scotland, while Constance, glad to escape from a place now become hateful from associations connected with the duel, began making preparations for their departure.

Scotland was peculiarly attractive to Constance. The home of literature, the home of the Stuart's regal race, Glasgow was her father's birthplace, while Scott's undying "Chronicles," threw their spell around Edinburgh, making it to her a legend-fraught abode.

With his "Heart of Mid Lothian" in her hands she would watch the mist gather round Salisbury Crags or gaze with pensive eye on Arthur's Seat, looming up darkly in the distance.

Driving out one day she was arrested by the cries of a little girl, literally clothed in rags, running out of a dilapidated building a little above the old palace of Holyrood.

On asking the child what was the matter she told, with many a sigh and sob, that "her mamma was doing."

Ever alive to the distress of others, Constance followed the little one up the dark staircase, entering by a broken door, partly wrenched off its hinges, to where a woman lay on a coarse bed in the low attic. Her face was pale and emaciated, but through all the want and disease still bore in the finely-cut lineaments the impress of having been eminently handsome.

Having sent the child for the coarse-looking woman, below, who was most loquacious when told she would be paid for any attention shown the poor invalid, Constance procured some warm tea, and, wrapping her own cloak over the chilled limbs of the poor woman, she soon revived, when, noting that she called the child Edith and mentioned having come from Glasgow she asked if Edith was a common name in Scotland.

"Not among the common people," was the some-

what odd reply. "I was called so as being the god-child of the young heiress of the house of Angus, and named my daughter as myself—she died young—this is my grandchild."

"You appear to have seen better days—have you resided long here?"

"But a few years. My father was a Glasgow merchant—my husband, George Ramsay, the son of the rector, having obtained a writership to India. The climate proved fatal. He died in India, and I returned to Scotland with my little Edith. She grew up a fair, frail, delicate thing—sleping in an evil hour with a young sailor, who immediately went abroad. Long, long did she, with woman's truthfulness, watch for his return, but though she heard from him over the salt sea, yet never did Gordis return, and Edith, gradually drooping, pining away, bowed her young head in death soon after the birth of this little one. I grew ill and would have perished of want had you not come to me."

Constance felt that in the dying woman before her she saw her father's cousin—her whom he had described as "the fair, golden-tressed Edith"—the Glasgow heiress, for whom he had abandoned the young, betrayed Adrienne Delpeche. She who in turn fitted him, marrying Mr. Ramsay, a letter acquainting him of the fact just as he was leaving to return to Scotland and secure the heiress and her case-fields. Thought was busy with Constance, carrying her to her mother's nameless grave—to the miserable abode of the lone and care-harassed miser, to the yet more miserable pallet whereon was laid in want and rage her to possess whose gold the whole had been wrought.

The white, transparent hands of the dying woman fell languidly at her side; worn out and weary, she soon fell asleep. Constance had neither interrupted her narrative nor disturbed her with useless comment. But when the low breathing told that she slept, then kneeling down in humility, her tearful eyes raised in deep adoration, she prayed, "Thy will be done!" while her heart reverted to the misery before her like the wind-harp to the breeze.

Placing a bank-note in Mrs. O'Shaunaghy's hand, she left, promising to send a doctor and comfortable clothing—left with her mind more resigned to submission to His will than during all her married life.

On arriving at the hotel a letter was handed to her.

With a trembling hand, and boding of pending evil that she could not shake off, she broke the seal and read:

"MADAM.—Your letter has been received, and I regret to inform you that the Eagle Insurance Company and Hawk Railroad Company have both failed under such circumstances that the stock will not likely be worth a farthing. Learning, however, that by the will of your guardian, the late president of the latter company, that you will be his heiress, my duty is the less painful, since you will regard these losses with comparative indifference. Should you at any time require my professional services, I shall be most happy to attend to any commissions with which you might favour.

"Yours respectfully,

"ALEXANDER WALKER."

What could her uncle's friend to whom she had written mean by the expression, late president? Surely her father could not be dead? No, she could not believe it—else Laurence's father would have written. No, the old usuary must have meant the term late president as connected with the late company.

The entire bulk of the little property left by her uncle, her little fortune gone?

Her husband, whose habits of extravagance demanded a far greater expenditure than sufficed for her less expensive tastes, had lately importuned his father to no purpose, no remittance having come, no reply to any of his letters, while, for her sensitive nature to be dependent upon whatever pittance the usurer's avaricious nature would deem sufficient to sustain upon would be most humiliating.

Lawrence's thoughtless nature first speculated, then grew angry at the delay, while Constance, accustomed to reverence, grew to look upon them as the natural order of events—and the boding was prophetic.

Commercial distresses swept with desolating force throughout the land, and the extensive house of Lawrence and Company was the first to fail—their silent partner and endorser, Thomas Lamb, ruined in their bankruptcy.

In the wreck that plunged so many into poverty he saw the accumulated gains of a life swept away, and borne down beneath the pressure of accumulated ill, the hitherto active energies of the old miser sank beneath this weight. His mind became clouded, illness succeeded, and in a few weeks he breathed his last.



[ACCEPTED.]

Sad and lone were the last moments of the dying man. Alone, left to his own reflections, which were not of the most enviable nature, the first overpowering agony of seeing the hoarded gains of life swept away was succeeded by a torpor of intellect, a hopeless indifference to all things. Mind-clouded and forgotten by all save his two physicians, who called twice a day to see him, he rapidly sank, until the night preceding his death, when he rallied, his senses returned, he spoke to the physician of his embarrassed affairs, spoke, too, of Constance, but only as Mrs. Lawrence, never once naming her as his daughter.

Perhaps he thought the little remnant of his property was not worth the clouding that pure brow with shame—not worth the making a will, for when the doctor suggested that he had better make such disposal of his property as he wished carried out, he said evasively he had so little left it would scarcely bury him—moreover, that he did not consider himself in any danger.

"That inflamed spot on your back has increased greatly since yesterday," said the doctor, portentously.

"Well, that's all that affects me now. Cannot you apply some lotion to take the fire out, doctor?"

"I have applied charcoal to arrest the progress, but I fear it will be of little avail."

Mr. Lamb groaned heavily.

"Are you in much pain?"

"None whatever, save that of my back."

"I will be candid with you, Mr. Lamb. The swollen black spot that appeared yesterday on the edge of the inflamed surface has greatly increased. You have battled too bravely with life to fear death."

"Death! What do you mean, doctor? I was not prepared for that!"

"Then let me advise you, Mr. Lamb, to make all preparation. If you wish, I will call upon our lawyer and send him to you, for I much fear you have little time in which to make preparations."

"Dying, dying!" he exclaimed. "Dying! it cannot be! I am not prepared yet! I cannot die!" And he raised himself on his elbow, as though to fly the fate that waited him.

But the pain caused by the sudden altering his position was so excruciating that he fell back with a groan. When, looking anxiously in the physician's face, he said:

"Oh, save me if you can, doctor!"

"I would wish to give you comfort, but feel it my duty to recommend you to be prepared for the worst."

And he left.

Alone with busy memory, his quick preception took in all his past life, his early educational advantages and his meeting with Florian Delpeche and his return for the warm friendship of the exemplary young man; his after life of toiling enterprise, ending in utter ruin; his daughter, the beautiful Constance, wedded to one wholly unworthy of her, impoverished by his act—for was it not he who had placed her little fortune in the worthless stock just then pronounced insolvent? And tortured with reflections like these, of energies wasted or turned from their proper channel, talents perverted, enterprise, a life of hoarded gains squandered, dying intestate, his daughter penniless, the doctor's assurance and parting suggestion struck heavily on his heart.

Had the gangrene already begun? Would he indeed never rise from that bed again?

Then, covering his eyes with his lean, skinny hand, he groaned aloud:

"The doctor did not deceive me—death is indeed upon me. I feel it here."

Overcome by conflicting emotions racking his tortured heart and brain, he fell into a state of wandering stupefaction that could scarce be called slumber, calling piteously for Constance to forgive him, praying her to return and assuring her of protection.

Groaning heavily, as though oppressed with nightmare, his breathing became hard, and his eyes at length assumed the stony stare of death. The usurer's spirit had fled.

It was surmised that Mr. Lamb must have had some money at the time of his death, but where it went or who was enriched by his long-hoarded wealth was a mystery.

Many shrewdly suspected that the housekeeper from long habits of observation had discovered where her master kept his money and had appropriated it when assured he could never call her to account for it.

While surmises were busy she and her two sons disappeared, and this changed doubt into comparative certainty.

Such was the end of Mr. Lamb. He had lived solitary—shut up from all communication with friends or relatives during his life—and died unattended in his last moments. There was none to cheer; neither love, nor friendship, nor sympathy approached him and he died wanting the care the meanest gets. Yet did many a claimant appear as next of kin to his estate.

His unfinished brick house, where he lived, had already been sold to a old man, Antonio

Zavelli, who shortly after erected on the site where the usurer's dwelling stood an imposing structure. So that when Constance returned, in two years from the date of her ill-starred marriage, not a vestige of the usurer's dwelling remained.

Suddenly indeed, and terribly, fell the blow on her young, devoted head. Alone, with no friend to advise—without money—among strangers. And where was he who had sworn to love and protect? Where was her husband in that dread hour? Why repeat the oft-told tale? why dwell upon a gambler's vices—an ingrate's treachery?

Laurence had never loved his beautiful wife. Her pure nature had little attraction for one accustomed to the meretricious allurements of vice and depravity. When he learned that his wife's investments had all been swept away, among bubble companies of the day, he but added to her afflictions by venting his wrath in mad and impotent ravings; then deserted her.

Finding that her husband took no notice of the letters she wrote him on receiving intelligence of her father's death, though she pleaded for his return to accompany her home with all a wife's and mother's fervour, pleading with a mother's eloquence the cause of her beautiful boy, she, as a last resort, wrote to his uncle, Mr. Poydrass, from whom she received an immediate reply, kindly inviting the poor, deserted one and her child to make his house their home.

She had just begun to raise her drooping head, deriving hope and comfort from the infantine carcases of her lovely child, and returning by her own sweet smile the fatherly kindness of the venerable man who gave them a home, when anxiety, and care, and fear again crowded upon her, embittering her young life, by the arrival of her worthless husband. Arrived, however, he was by no means prepared for the change that had taken place. His father had been obliged to sell out his luxurious house, his servants, carriage, all his costly surroundings, and borne down by a change too humiliating to be endured, had sought refuge in suicide; his mother had gone to reside with her own still wealthy family. For a brief time Lawrence was completely subdued. Cowering beneath the humiliating sense of meriting nothing from his wife or uncle save repulse, he first wrote to Constance, apprising her of his arrival and penitence, then to his uncle, asking permission to call to see his child. Oh, subterfuge! could he cheat himself, or hope to cheat others, by a suddenly formed affection for the child, for those well-being he had never traced an inquiring line—yet whom, to but look upon, he now to humbly craved permission.

(To be continued.)



[THE INTERVIEW.]

THYRA DESMOND; OR, THE MAIDEN OF THE LAKE.

CHAPTER XXXV.

But short the moments, short as bright,
When he the wings can borrow;
If Time to-day has had his flight,
Love takes his turn to-morrow.
Ah, Time and Love, you change it then,
The saddest and most trying,
When one begins his trip again,
And other takes to flying.

Then his love is turned astray, and then he flies away.
"This is an unusual request that you have sent to me, Lord Oranmore," said Lady Beatrix Clare, as she placed herself by the side of the couch on which the young viscount had been laid for the first time since his convalescence. "And it is equally singular that I am able to comply with it," she went on. "You know that owing to my aunt's indisposition I perhaps enjoy unusual liberty; but still," she continued, more haughtily, "I strive not to cast discredit on the confidence she reposes in me."

The invalid's face underwent considerable yet somewhat inscrutable changes as his fair visitor spoke.

His lips certainly did part in a feeble smile for a moment, but it soon vanished, and his eyes were bent earnestly and gravely on Lady Beatrix with an expression that she tried in vain to read as some guide to her own conduct and the probable course of the coming interview.

At length the viscount spoke, and the sound of his changed and feeble voice made his companion start with a veiled compassion and horror at the too visible evidence of the sufferings that he had undergone.

Did she remember that it was her own guilty fault—did she realize the extent of the responsibility she had encountered by this risk of human life?

"Lady Beatrix, I acknowledge that you are in a measure running risk by this proceeding," he said, calmly; "but it is perhaps not more entirely compromising than the course you have thought fit to adopt upon this accident."

The young lady drew herself up with a sudden recollection of pride.

"I do not understand you, my lord, and I did not come hither to be insulted or lectured," she said, angrily.

"Your very presence here is a proof that you consider I have some claim on you, Lady Beatrix," he replied, coldly. "And you will, I think, confess that

my sufferings and my narrow escape from death were in themselves owing to your beauty, shall I say, and to the misunderstanding which you certainly did your best to foster between your cousin and myself."

"Which you chose to entertain, my lord," answered Lady Beatrix. "It would be a very remarkable penalty for us damsels were we to be held responsible for every quarrel that springs up on our account."

"Perhaps so, Lady Beatrix," he said. "And if there is no excuse given for man's vanity or any encouragement to his love then he is simply a justly punished coxcomb if he dares any risks on her account. But I ask your own conscience whether you did give me any reason to believe that you were engaged to Lord Ashworth, that he was more to you than a favourite cousin?"

The girl's crimson blood-flush spoke of a deeper emotion than mere maiden shyness at such a question, and her reply was by no means any indication of softened regret.

"Lord Oranmore, I can only give you one reply," she said. "It has never been announced to any one, and therefore I do not see that it need be published to any stranger who might pay me the usual attentions of a gentleman."

"Perhaps not, but when you saw that I felt far more than the usual admiration that a man shows for a beautiful woman," was the stern reply; "when you perceived that my every thought and attention was absorbed by you and that I claimed from you only what you appeared ready to bestow—what then, Lady Beatrix? Would you not have despised me if I had drawn back at the first advance of one who had no authority over you and yet assumed the tone of a privileged suitor? I risked my life rather than submit to such a degradation, Lady Beatrix, and now I can ask at your hands what I could not have had the right to demand as a politeness."

"And I, in my turn, may very well say that this compliance with your request is a proof that I do feel it gracious and kindly after the risk you have run," answered the girl, earnestly. "Lord Oranmore, I am not accustomed to be schooled and submissive. I must warn you not to drive me too far. Do not urge me to say and do what might wound your feelings in your present condition."

"Oh, do not be concerned, Lady Beatrix. I am not so impressionable," replied the invalid, with a languid smile. "Perhaps the blood-letting has relieved my brain, or my heart, or both. I assure you, Lady Beatrix, I can take a very calm view of matters now. Although I do not pretend to admire you less,

nor feel less willing and anxious to secure your hand, and—"

"And what, my lord?" put in Lady Beatrix. "Do not hesitate to express yourself clearly and plainly. I shall scarcely call you to account for any words, spoken in a sick-room and the time of convalescence. Go on with your very candid confession, if you please."

"I would just ask one from you, fair lady," returned Lord Oranmore, calmly. "Are you, or do you mean to be the betrothed of Gaston Ashworth? I owe him no good-will certainly, but I should like to know exactly the amount of forbearance I should show him, whether as your favoured or your rejected suitor."

"And suppose I should decline giving you any such answer?" said the lady, firmly.

"Then I should not a cruple to proclaim the truth," he said, significantly. "It were pity that Lady Beatrix Clare should be proclaimed as either a rejected damsel, or as a vain coquette in the world where she should reign as a beautiful heiress."

"You could not, you dare not be so base and false!" she said eagerly.

"I would be neither. I would be but just," he said, the languor of his frame actually vanquished by the force of his suppressed feelings. "Listen to me, Beatrix—for I see you either cannot or will not comprehend the position in which you and I stand to each other—Heaven knows well that it was from your thoughtless coquetry that my life, ay, and your cousin's also, nearly fell a sacrifice. And now, when that danger is in a degree over, the least you can do is to repair your fault by telling the truth and frankly confessing either that you are fully betrothed, or that you are still to be won. I insist on a reply, or you may rue the consequences to yourself and to others also, who ought to be dear to you."

Beatrix still hesitated, even more perhaps from policy than pride. It was what Gaston Ashworth had said.

She knew in her heart that it was true, that she was bound in honour to frankly and generously release one or both of these suitors from their partial bondage to her charms.

Either she should refuse her cousin, or she should tell Lord Oranmore that her hand was at least partially engaged to the cousin with whom he had thus recently fought.

But then, in the first case, she would forfeit her fortune by thus taking the initiative in breaking the semi-betrothal, or else she would forfeit all chances of the suit of Lord Oranmore being pressed on her acceptance.

Beatrix had already formed some idea of the value of wealth, even when such beauty and rank as hers were in the question, and therefore she had more practical views as to her chances in the world where she had hitherto been a fêted and admired belle.

All this passed through her mind with the rapidity of light, and she was scarcely conscious of the pause which followed Lord Oranmore's words in the tumult and confusion of her feelings.

But at length some temporizing expedient occurred to a mind that had hitherto been too proud and honourable to dream of or to need either falsehood or deception.

"You press me hardly, my lord," she said, at length, with a softened look and tone. "You cannot well comprehend the position in which I am placed; you cannot imagine the difficulty that should certainly govern a woman's actions and words. I do not deny that there may be some link between Lord Ashworth and myself, but as it is where the creation of others than our own will, and we have neither of us absolutely or fully rallied to us I have never consented on my part to the arrangement. I do not think it fair or right to drag from my lips what is by no means an agreeable statement of affairs between my cousin and myself."

Lord Oranmore gave a cynical smile. "Then you have to live with, or at least to live close to, the matter, I suppose, Lady Beatrix. Most women know their own minds on such subjects, and especially a beauty and beauty like yourself. And of course it is impossible that the doctor can be in any other quarter. Lord Ashworth must be only too eager to seize his prize."

"I suppose he would equally have resented your interference were it otherwise," said the lady, haughtily. "But it is surely for me to answer for him in the matter. It is enough that I explain that we are not absolutely engaged, nor wholly free, and even that I trust to your honour, my lord, to keep entirely confined to your own house."

"Oh, you need not fear so long as you are frank and candid with me, sweet lady," he said, tenderly. "Beatrix, be advised; throw yourself on my friendship, even if you cannot accept my love. Tell me what you really mean, tell me on what I am to rely so far as my present wishes and intentions are in question, and I shall know what and who to blame if any contingency should arise that may possibly result from this state of matters."

It was a perplexing question. Beatrix precisely desired the reverse of what her cousin demanded.

"Lord Oranmore, pardon me," he said, "but it seems that you rather wish me to take the place that should be yours. It is hardly fair to expect I should decide on my feelings about half-declared suitors."

"It is not the custom of high-born maidens, Lord Oranmore, and if you really do think of me as a woman you could make your wife, you cannot wish such degradation for me," she went on, with a half-pleading air that was far more persuasive than her more haughty tone and mien to one like Hugh Oranmore.

"Yes, Beatrix, yes," he said. "I do not wish my wife to be degraded by any coquetry or subterfuge, but I wish her to be distinguished by truth and honour."

"Be frank, Beatrix," he added, "be worthy of yourself. If you cannot ascertain now what are your real sentiments for me or for your cousin, you can at least know whether you prefer waiting for his pleasure, or whether you are free now to give me the answer I should demand were I at once to place it before you to decide—were I to say," Beatrix, give up all and be my wife."

She started involuntarily. "What do you mean—what am I to give up for you?" she exclaimed, suddenly, a vague idea, half hope half terror, seizing her that the "all" might include the fortune that she would forfeit, and that the penalty might even be known to her new admirer.

His answer soon dissipated the idea. "What are you to give up?" he said. "Why, the self-will and the admiration and the coquetry that nearly proved my destruction. Give up the cousin, whose superior title may perhaps dazzle you, and who has certainly delayed somewhat in closing any agreement between you. Will you—can you do this, Beatrix?"

The girl had high blood and a proud nature, in spite of her weakness and defects.

She shrank from the wilful deception that would be practised on her admirer should she conceal from him the forfeiture of her wealth were she to reject Gaston, or take the first step in breaking off the semi-engagement with him, and yet she did not choose to confess it till her resolution was taken.

"No, Lord Oranmore, I cannot yet," she said, with a sudden assumption of frank fearlessness in her look and gesture. "But if you choose to give me time, then I will think. I will ask myself deliberately what will be the best for my own happiness and others. Is that your wish, or shall I tell you at once the very brief word that could express what my reply would be now?"

Hugh Oranmore had bid her discard coquetry, but, like many other men while dealing with a beautiful girl, found it lost its repulsiveness when exercised with soft and winning archness on his own behalf.

"Yes, if you are in earnest. I would take your answer and act with freedom and leave you to do the same, Beatrix," he replied. "If you have doubt or difficulties I will give you what time may be reasonable to consider your decision. How long do you want?"

She thought for a brief moment, and her colour varied almost as if she were in the first dawn of youth and love.

"I cannot arrange for my final decision in less than three months," she said, "and if you do really care for me, and if you mean to wait, she added, more lightly and gaily, "then you will soon find the time pass rapidly. You would not court any other damsel during that time, would you, my lord?"

And a bright smile broke over her features as she spoke which completed their charm.

Lord Oranmore faintly returned the smile.

"You know and use your power too well," he said, shaking his head. "But you must have your own way this once. I will wait the time you specify, and then I reserve my freedom to do as my heart pleases me. You will find perhaps that there is a limit to masculine patience both with your cousin and myself."

And as Lady Beatrix rose to depart she felt in her heart that she had won a real but only temporary victory that might well end in a defeat.

Lord Oranmore lay for a time in the utter expectation which was certain to succeed such a passage of arms and the watchman's production of which remained as the last traces of his terrible danger.

But at last he seemed to dismiss the agonizing subject from his thoughts, and the entrance of the domestic with refreshments finally raised him from abstraction and repose.

CHAPTER XXXV.

As Rosanne the change had been effected, without any material injury to the invalid, from the atmosphere to the beautiful and romantic scene of the Vesels, and Thyras at last found herself in more congenial and home like surroundings than those with which she had been surrounded since she left her beloved Lough Corrib.

The house itself was a field of interest and of excitement to her unsophisticated tastes, but she was more fettered in her wanderings over so romantic antiquities than while exploring the neighbourhood without, and during the same week, Erics' sleep, or when in her unceasing kindness she insisted on her young nurse seeking aid and recreation in the rambles in which she had herself so delighted and which she could scarcely hope to enjoy again, and what in some degree guided her nurse was the strange fact that the housekeeper, Bridget Malone, appeared to have rather a shy repugnance to entering into any form or kind of communication with her, while Mike Halloran, when he had any chance of showing her kindness or attention, never spared his efforts to gratify her curiosity or to offer his services as a guide or an interpreter of the peculiarities of the spot.

She was wandering one morning near the lake which is supposed to have been the scene of the tragedy which gave the inspiration to the beautiful lines of the Irish poet:

Tears from Kathleen's eye he flew,
Eye of most autholy blue.
She had loved him well and long,
Wished him hers, nor thought it wrong.
Where'er the saint would fly
Still he heard his light step nigh;
East or west, where'er he turned,
Still her eyes before him burned.

And as she read the verses and looked at the waters which had been, as is presumed, the scene of the tragedy, and the grave of the poor and discarded Kathleen, her thoughts led her back to the old days when the romantic episode took place.

She could picture to herself the devotion that had occupied the worshippful heart of the fair Kathleen, and which was lavished on a hard and unfeeling man, who so sternly rejected and ignored the warm, true heart that was filled with his image.

And with a selfishness that called forth more sympathy with Kathleen's weak devotion than with the rigid virtue of the saint, she recalled once again the conclusion of the verses.

Ah, you saints have cruel hearts
Sternly from his bed he starts,
And with rude, impulsive shock
Hurts her from the beeting rock.
Glendalough, thy gloomy wave
Soon was gentle Kathleen's grave;
Soon the saint—but, oh! too late,
Felt her love and mourned her fate.
When he said "Heaven rest her soul"
Round the lake light music stole,
And the ghost was seen to glide
Smiling o'er the fatal tide.

The girl involuntarily repeated the lines in an audible though perhaps under-tone, and her sweet voice was still sounding in the silent air when Mike approached her from some unseen nook where he had been fishing.

"Oh, and it's you, is it, Miss Desmond? The top of the morning to you, and it's yourself that's the brightest and the sweetest flower of the country round, now that dear Miss Erics is gone, as you may say."

Thyras could scarcely restrain a smile. "May, Mike, you must not say that," she said. "Surely you do not consider Miss Vesel as out of the world because she is laid aside for a time, and we hope that she will be bright and gay again, before many months are over," she went on, though she secretly confessed that it was more likely that years would elapse, rather than months, before Erics Vesel was again sporting about those familiar scenes, if indeed she was deemed ever to see them more.

Mike shook his head.

"Surely one of us knows, Miss Desmond, and it's only this that I am sure about, that if any one can bring her back again it's your party self, who seems to watch and take care of her like a sister, poor dear! that she is, and the very apple of her father's eye, but do you know, miss," he went on, drawing nearer to the spot where Thyras was sitting, "do you know, I've many a time thought it was a judgment on the family, that the sweet darlin'—the pride of Rosanne, should be stricken down? It's but a punishment for what was to my mind as hard and cruel a deed as ever St Kevin did, rest his soul in glory."

Thyras was no curious or unscrupulous damsel, to take advantage of the loquacity or the affections of a domestic and thus pry into the family secrets that in any other case might not have even been confided to stranger's ears.

But the scene, the allusions, and the solitude of her whole life did combine to give additional and unusual interest to Mike's allusions, and more especially when combined with the legend of St Kevin, and she could not forbear the gentle but questioning reply:

"And what was it then that you do so much disapprove, good Mike, and that should bring a curse on so sweet a creature as your young mistress? Surely she must be too innocent and too fair to be such a victim."

Mike hastily snatched up his fishing tackle, as if in utter indignation at the very idea thus suggested. "Is it myself that would even say or think such a thing of the sweetest and fairest blossom that ever can be found in all Erin?" he exclaimed.

"No—no, Miss Desmond, that's not it; but they do say sometimes that it is the most innocent and the best that are punished for the rest. Anyhow, it was a sad business and one that will never be forgotten so long as there's a Vesel at Rosanne."

Thyras's interest was more strongly excited than ever.

"If it were not a secret, if you would not break any good faith in telling me, I should be very pleased to hear this same tale, my good Mike," she said. "I am so much alone in the world that all that belong to those in whom I am at all interested has an especial attraction for me."

Mike surveyed her with some keener scrutiny than the occasion warranted.

"Well, I don't mind so much telling yourself, Miss Desmond, though it's not Mike Halloran who will ever betray his family's secrets, or tell of the skeleton in the cupboard, that my mother used to say dwelt in the great homes more than the little shabens," he said, "and, what's more, you have a look of the Vesels that makes me feel as if you were in the family, though you're a different voice from them—I fancy I'd know your voice in the dark, Miss Desmond," he went on, reflectively.

Thyras could not help starting with a slight expression of surprise. It was not the first time that her attention had been called to the peculiarity of tone that existed in her own and her deceased father's voices.

Mr. and Mrs. O'Byrne and the good Galway physician had more than once alluded to the resonant, bell-like sweetness that distinguished both, and she could herself realize the truth of the remark from the observation she had made of other vocal organs in her brief residence in the world since leaving her secluded home. But it was something for a mere

servitor like Mike to notice the peculiarity and also to distinguish it in contrast to other points of resemblance with the beloved family at Rosanne.

"I am glad if I possess anything that gives you confidence or regard for me, Mike," she replied, with a smile; "and now, will you give me some idea of your meaning, as I must not remain much longer away from Miss Vesici?"

"Ah! and it's yourself is good and kind to her, pretty darling that she is," returned Mike, warmly. "So I'll just tell you what little I know and have heard about the matter."

"You see, Miss Desmond, that some sixty years or so ago—for I cannot say the exact year, though my mother knew to a day when it all happened—Sir Hilary's father resided at Rosanne, and he was, like all the men of the race, stern and resolved, and as proud as you may see they have a right to be, since there's few in old Erin who can match them for the cold blood and the pure descent."

"And therefore, you can see, Miss Desmond, that he'd be jealous like of any one coming here to court his only daughter, Miss Theresa. He had only got her and Sir Hilary's father, you see, miss, for the Vesici have never had many children, and they're died young, have the race for many a generation. There was this old gentleman, Sir Denis, and he died before he was fifty, and Sir Hilary's father was but forty-five, and Sir Hilary himself is not much more than that now, for all he looks so grave and broken."

"Well," continued the old servitor, "Sir Denis was bent on his daughter making a grand match when she took to herself a husband, and Miss Theresa was very beautiful, I've heard, and as proud and willful as her father himself; so, as I have heard, she would have her way, and although her father chose a lord for her in his own religion and one that he liked and who was rich and noble, she fell in love with some one else, whom she met in secret, and when her father came to know about it he flew in a towering rage and at once locked her up in the tower of Rosanne—which is a good step from the house, you see, miss, and where she only had her maid and a man he had trusted for years to wait on her, or rather so he had trusted—and so the poor darling young lady was in disgrace, I reckon, and then at last she was missing, and the maid and the man nearly frantic when they found she had flown. But there was great talk that one of them had helped her flight, and Sir Denis was fit to murder the whole neighbourhood in his rage. But it was no use; it was done and could not be helped, let him storm as he might."

"Well, and then?" said Thyra, in eager anxiety for the unfortunate maiden, when Mike had stopped.

"And then, Miss Desmond," continued Mike, in a half-whisper, "not a soul knows much, only she was found after some three or four years and brought back, never to leave more except in death, so I was told, and her picture was taken from its place and her name was never mentioned in the mansion, nor in the presence of Sir Denis, or his son, Sir Hilary's father."

"And then you see, miss, that Sir Hilary was an only child, and Miss Erica the first girl, since her poor grand-mother, that has been born to the family, so that's why it is that I said it was a punishment for the pretty, innocent darling for the sake of the cruelty and the sin that was done to Miss Theresa—rest her soul."

Thyra involuntarily shivered at the idea thus suggested.

"You surely do not mean that she was murdered?" she gasped.

"Murdered, is it you mean, Miss Desmond. Well, I won't say that," he replied, gravely. "But there's many a way to kill besides the knife and the poison, and if the poor lady broke her heart it's murder, to my thinking. But, dear! dear! it's a crying shame for me to speak thus, only it seems as if you were one of the cold blood, you see, Miss Thyra."

It was strange he using her Christian name, as he did to his own dear young lady; but Thyra did not notice it at the moment. She did but assure him of her truth and secrecy in the matter, and then rising hastily from her rustic seat, she fled, as it were, from the spot where she had heard the brief and vague legend of the unhappy Theresa Vesici.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SOME weeks had passed away, and still Gaston, Lord Ashmore, lingered within the precincts of that remarkable region where he had been unexpectedly charmed with the beautiful portrait of the unfortunate Theresa, whom he considered so strange and faithful a resemblance of her he was now proud to confess the lovely; ay, and loved with his whole true heart, as if she were a beautiful living being.

Yet, what madness to entertain such an idea, what madness to dream of an obscure and nameless woman, of whose history he was in total ignorance

and who was in all likelihood as portionless as she was fair, and of unknown birth.

But beside these drawbacks, was the fact of his own betrothal to his cousin, and the publicity into which his name had been brought from the duel he had in a manner challenged, and from which, as might even yet happen, the guilt of bloodshed might still rest upon his head.

It was these ideas that detained and haunted him like a spell.

He could not carry out his primary design and leave the country where his life was in such danger.

And still less could he bring himself to appear publicly and run the risk of the penalties and the disgrace and punishment which would certainly be his fate till Lord Oranmore should be pronounced out of danger, and no tribunal in bold Erin would pronounce him guilty for vindicating at once his honour and his courage.

He lingered at the humble but clean little shanty that gave him a safe shelter from possible pursuit.

At the very worst, he could have found a hiding-place in the deep recesses of the cave of St. Kevin, where so few dared to penetrate, and Sir Hilary Vesici, in the virtue of his commission as justice of the peace, would, he believed, have shielded him from unfair or revengeful outrage on his life or his liberty.

But it was weary, weary work to remain in such inactive suspense, and many a time and oft he chafed and festered so desperately under the restraint thus imposed on him that he well might determine to end so miserable a suspense, and cast himself on the protection and the counsel of the high-born gentleman from whom he was confident help and justice might be found.

He had left his humble dwelling in some such mood, and wandered more openly and boldly than usual on the borders of the lake, where he was tolerably certain not to meet one living creature to his ramble, till he came to the very spot where Thyra and Mike Halloran had held some hours before their confidential converse.

He sat down under the shadow of the beetling rock, which sheltered him so effectually from all observation, and began to amuse himself by an idle, leisurely examination of every feature of the scene around.

His hand wandered idly over the grass and bramble that covered the side of the steep cliff, and at times destroyed flowering blossoms or crawling insects in his unconscious raid.

But at length his finger encountered a yet more hard and startling substance, and drawing it to towards him, with the idle curiosity that perfect stagnation of interest induces, he began to examine the tiny object he had discovered.

And as he looked at it his eyes flashed with quick and sudden pleasure.

It was a relic of the past. It was an association with the most memorable day of his life—the meeting with Thyra Desmond, the maiden of the lake.

He remembered it well, that small, glittering object, for it was an ornament he had, as he believed, seen her wear.

A beautifully carved, slag-iron-work gold cross, in which was inserted a place for hair or for initials to be placed. A trinket that he had admired as much as he could notice any adjunct of such loveliness as Thyra possessed.

He eagerly examined it.

It was even more curious and beautiful than he had believed, as it hung from the girl's neck on a fairy chain, for the extreme delicacy of the workmanship, and the ingenious plating of the hair, on which two small letters were impressed, had something alike foreign and rare in their characteristics.

But the most remarkable feature of the trinket, in his eyes, was the initials themselves. It bore the letters "T. O." in small, almost invisible letters over the exquisite fair brown hair.

Whose could it be?

The second initial bore no reference to the lake maiden, and yet he fancied the shade of the hair might be here, so closely did it resemble Thyra's rich tresses.

He was busily engaged in closely investigating this fairy-like work when he was roused by the sound of a footstep near to him, and he instinctively thrust the pretty trifle in his pocket, though by no means intending to perpetrate any felonious deed by the appropriation. He had scarcely time effectually to conceal it ere the new comer approached from behind the shadow of the crested rock.

It was a figure not altogether unfamiliar to the earl.

And yet, in the agitation of the moment, he did not at once recognise the identity of the intruder

with the sole witness of his fatal encounter with Lord Oranmore. He could not, in a brief instant, discern the features of the army doctor, Terrence Shane.

"Ha! my lord, well met," said the doctor, in his cheery, unrestrained, Irish brogue. "It's likely enough that you may not be altogether so well pleased to see me as I am to see you. You look as if you barely remembered me," he continued, as Lord Ashmore gave a somewhat cold return to his ardent and repeated greeting. "You surely have not so short a memory as to forget our meeting in the Phoenix Park some months since?"

"Scarcely, Dr. Shane," replied the earl, coldly; "but you will allow that there were no such very pleasant circumstances attending our rencontre as to give me very great happiness at our present meeting. You say you are in search of me. May I ask what news you have to communicate that you have taken such pains to find me?"

"Oh, there are many things that I have to say to you, my lord," said the doctor, "but none so very distressing as to make you shrink from me as if I was an adder, which, by the way, as you know, cannot exist in the Emerald Isle."

"Not in an animal, but too often in a human shape we can meet them here, I suspect, Dr. Shane," said the earl, coldly. "But I am not in a mood to discuss national peculiarities with you. It is enough that you are here and that I am ready to listen to what you have to communicate."

"What do you expect to learn, my lord?" said Dr. Shane, sharply.

"Perhaps that Lord Oranmore is dead or dying," said Gaston, with a suppressed shudder.

"Not exactly so terrible as that," said the doctor, cheerily. "Thanks to the skill and care of your humble servant, Lord Oranmore, is at this moment out of immediate danger, but by no means of the consequences that are both equally certain and disastrous when following these."

"And what may they be, Dr. Shane?" asked Gaston; quickly, his countenance firm and unflinching, though there was a strange and heavy burden on his heart that well nigh stopped its beating.

"Feverish, inflammatory action of the nerves and brain, that will be more hurtful, and, I may say, at any time may shatter his constitution and utterly ruin his remaining life. And therefore," he added, "you will consider, my lord, that you can scarcely expect to escape scot-free under such circumstances."

"And what may be the penalty? what is the redress you seek?" asked Lord Ashmore, coldly, constraining as best he might the inclination to level by a blow the irritating and smiling physician to the ground on which he stood.

"You can give one, you can make what sacrifice is demanded of you in order to stave to the man you have so injured," replied the doctor, "and, in plain words, I am here in search of you to endeavour to negotiate for the compromise Lord Oranmore is willing to accept."

"If Lord Oranmore lives I certainly have no call on my forbearance or my generosity," was the stern reply. "Our lives were equally risked, and I consider he was the aggressor; that had I fallen his position would have been mine and mine his. Now it is over thus far, and if he has suffered no harm, I and if he has brought on himself any further misery than his temporary wound I cannot be held responsible for it."

"Are you sure of that, my lord?" asked the doctor, firmly. "Are you sure that it was not your fault that Lord Oranmore was slain to vindicate himself in the manner he did? Had you informed him that you were betrothed to the Lady Beatrix Clare, or even a favoured pretendant to her hand, he would have felt and consequently acted very differently. Such deception could hardly be justified where the happiness and honour of young and honourable men are at stake."

Gaston crimsoned deeply.

He could scarcely answer the taunt without compromising himself or Beatrix Clare to a considerable extent.

Was it for him to cast the blame on the equidity of his beautiful cousin, or on the other hand to remove the claim and deny the bond that linked him to Beatrix Clare, while yet he had never been freed from it in her sight and presence?

It was unworthy of a man of honour to take either course, and he replied, with consequent and natural irritation at the dilemma in which he was placed by the acute Irish doctor:

"It is not my intention nor my duty to make any explanation of my private affairs or the position in which Lady Maud and I stand to each other," he said haughtily. "If Lord Oranmore is living and convalescent I have no farther remorse on his account, as I know in my conscience that I was no

aggressor in his case. If he wishes any farther satisfaction you can certainly name it, at your option, Dr. Shane, but I warn you it is extremely improbable that I shall be inclined to give it. What is it that he can desire, except the risk of both our lives? What can he expect me to yield to him? Any pecuniary compensation for the injuries and outlay of his illness?"

And a scornful smile crossed his lips as he spoke, that was returned with interest and with a far more broad and careless expression by the doctor.

"I can soon tell you what he does require you to yield to him, my Lord Ashworth," he answered, calmly. "He requires you to relinquish any claim which you may fancy that you possess to the hand of your cousin, Lady Beatrice Clare; in that case, he will, you perceive, be able to try his fate with your fair cousin, and if he does not he will be spared the pain and the consequence of thinking that he was, to use a plain and homely phrase, befooled in the matter."

Gaston looked fixedly at the doctor as he delivered this oration.

There was a mingled incredulity and restraint in the expression of his fine features that to the acute eyes of the physician boded little good, to the demand he had made.

And the very pause that ensued had a marked meaning, since it gave greater weight and point to the decision his next utterance announced.

"Dr. Shane, I presume that you are serious, and that you are Lord Oramore's accredited and instructed employé, if so, you can simply tell him that I decline altogether the terms or the request he dares to make. If he wishes to try his fate, it is to the Lady Beatrice or her aunt, and not to me, that the offer should be made. It will be for her to say what is her position and her wishes, and that once done, I shall know what action to take in the affair, without his assistance. I wish you good day, Dr. Shane," he added aloud in the same breath.

And, with a cold and haughty bow, he turned away and soon disappeared in a neighbouring cleft in the rock, which by no means appeared tempting for the older and heavier figure of the doctor.

In truth, the attempt to follow could by no means have been unattended with danger to the matured Dr. Shane, and he walked off in his turn with a significant nod and whistle that were scarcely ominous of good to his late companion.

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

It is stated that the swinging saloon of the Bessemer steamship, intended to prevent sea-sickness on the channel passage between England and France, is a failure.

A NEW SYSTEM OF GAS LIGHTING.—We hear of a new system of gas lighting by hydrocarbon. The apparatus consists of an air compressor at some central locality, several small tanks (one to each lamp-post), a small air tube connecting each with the reservoir filled by the compressor, and another small tube which carries the air charged with petroleum vapour to the burner. The tank is made of galvanized iron, with top and bottom of copper, and holds 48 gallons, that quantity of oil being somewhat in excess of a six months' supply. The hydrocarbon used is a low quantity of benzine. It is fed into a tank through an aperture in the top. It is stated that the cost of the gas is about 1s. 7d. per 1,000 feet.

PREVENTION OF SEA-SICKNESS.—The models and drawings of a new self-acting saloon to prevent sea-sickness, patented and invented by Mr. Alexander Walker, C.E., have been exhibited to a number of scientific gentlemen. The invention is very simple and, divested of technical terms, may be described as follows: A longitudinal girder and a transverse sectional girder are fastened to the ship's frame, and in the centre is a universal cup through which runs a stem. The saloon forms the upper weight, and a ball at the end of the stem the counterbalancing weight. It is so regulated as to work at an angle of 65 degrees. It is alleged that the invention, if adopted, will prevent any unpleasant experience of the pitching and rolling or the cross movement of the ship.

BRIGHTENING IRON.—A Bavarian journal contains a method of brightening iron recommended by Boden. The articles to be brightened are, when taken from the forge or the rolls, in the case of such articles as plate, wire, etc., placed in dilute sulphuric acid (1 to 20), where they remain for about an hour. This has the effect of cleansing them, and they are washed clean with water and dried with sawdust. They are then dipped for about a second in nitrous acid, washed carefully, dried in sawdust and rubbed clean. It is said that iron goods thus treated acquire a bright surface, having a white

glance, without undergoing any of the usual polishing operation. Care should be taken by any one using the nitrous acid not to inhale its fumes. Boden says that the action of the sulphuric acid is increased by the addition of a little carbolic acid, but it is difficult to see what effect this can have, and it may be very well dispensed with.

PROFESSOR WOHLER, the veteran German chemist, who has few peers and no superior in his science, lately permitted some interesting recollections of his early life to be read before the German Chemical Society of Berlin, although he would not consent that they should be printed in the proceedings. Fifty years ago he commenced his chemical studies, at Stockholm, in the laboratory of the great Swedish chemist, Berzelius, to which he found his way after landing in the city, by the guidance of a Swedish student, with whom he talked in Latin, that being the only language they both understood. The laboratory consisted simply of two bare rooms and kitchen, used for cooking as well as chemical work. It was here that Berzelius received courtiers and men of science alike. His pupil travelled with him through Sweden and through Norway, where Sir Humphrey Davy was salmon-fishing at the time, and so great was the celebrity of the Swedish chemist, that an official refused a passport fee from Wohler because he was studying with so eminent a master.

STEEL FOR DIES.—A vital point in the production of coining and medal dies is the judicious selection of the material of which they are to be made. That material is the very finest cast steel which Sheffield is able to furnish. There are two good and sufficient reasons for employing this choice and costly metal. The first is that, when properly faced and softened for the purpose, the fine lines to be put upon it by the artist may be brought out with adequate distinctness; the second, that it shall have enough of homogeneity, toughness and strength to enable the dies made from it to withstand the constant "hammer, hammer, hammer," of the coining-press. The choosing of the bars of cast steel to be converted into dies is thus a very important matter. Constant practice, close observation and various testings have made the die-sinkers and workmen of the Mint excellent judges of the quality of the article, and hence they seldom fail to obtain it in a high state of perfection. That kind of cast steel which shows when fractured a moderately fine grain, has a bluish hue, is of uniform texture and, when polished and placed under a magnifying glass, reveals no spots (mechanically speaking) the best.

EXCOMMUNICATED INSECTS.—Appropos of the efforts in progress to destroy the phylloxera and other insect scourges in France, a writer gives a curious bit of information relative to the way in which such pests used to be proceeded against when science, save so far as it could be made to agree with theological dogmas, had no existence for the world. In 1120 the Bishop of Laon formally excommunicated all the caterpillars and field mice. In 1488 the grand vicars of Autun commanded the parish priests of the vicinity to enjoin the weevils to cease their ravages, and to excommunicate them. In 1535 the Grand Vicar of Valence cited the caterpillars to appear before him for trial. He kindly assigned them counsel for their defence, and, as they did not appear, proceeded against and sentenced them, in contumacious, to clear out of his diocese, a command which they probably obeyed. During the seventeenth century thirty-seven similar judgments against both insects and quadrupeds were issued. One is on record, during the eighteenth century, fulminated against a cow; and there is still another of later date, due to a judge of Falaise, who condemned and hanged a sow for killing a child.

SOME NEW VOLCANO REVELATIONS.

The theory that our earth was successively a vaporous, a fluid and a plastic mass, which by cooling during billions of centuries finally obtained a solid crust, in connection with the fact that during all this time she progressed round the sun and received on her equator solar heat (of which the poles were nearly deprived) leads necessarily to the conclusion that, in the neighbourhood of the poles, the slowly-forming solid crust must have become thicker than it is around the equator, because the solar heat was able to retard the cooling longer at the equator than at the poles. Such a crust is of course more easily perforated by interior pressure acting outwardly where it is thinnest, and volcanoes, which are the result of such perforation, must therefore be more numerous in the thinner places, such as around the equator and scarce near the poles. This is confirmed by observation. Active volcanoes are not frequent around the poles—the only one near the north pole is in Iceland—while between the tropics such volcanoes are found in considerable numbers.

Another interesting consideration is that the amount of material ejected by volcanoes is enormous.

The estimates of the volume of the lava ejected by Vesuvius, Etna, and especially by the volcanoes of Iceland are appalling figures, and all these masses necessarily come from the interior of the earth, and must create in the neighbourhood of the volcanoes (which may be considered as safety valves) empty spaces, which are filled up by a sinking of the crust. This logical conclusion has been verified by the observation that every active volcano is situated in the centre of a region of depression and never in one of upheaval, unless the material ejected by the volcano itself be so considered.

But a still more remarkable fact has been revealed by the calculations of astronomers making observations at different points of the earth's surface. It is that there are two points of depression, extending even over the ocean's surface, forming a kind of flattened poles, one the exact antipodes of the other. These points are the Antilles, in the West Indies, and the Sunda Islands (Java and its surroundings), in the East Indian Ocean.

Each region contains a greater number of active volcanoes in a smaller surface than can probably be found anywhere else on the earth. But the reason why the ocean's surface partakes of this depression at these two volcanic centres is as yet a problem.

Modern observations have already proved many irregularities in the form of the ocean's mean level, making the ocean's surface to be far from a perfect spheroid. As this surface must, according to the laws of hydrostatics, be always at right angles to the direction of gravitation, it proves that, at various points of the earth's surface, the lines of gravitation do not pass through the same central point, even on places of the same latitude. As gravitation is a general property of matter, depending on its mass, it proves that the mass in the interior of the earth is not homogeneous, nor of uniform density, and that it is unequally distributed. As the interior is liquid, this distribution may be effected by cosmic influences, as for instance the relative position of the moon and planets, and any change effected in this distribution may react on the direction of gravitation on the earth's surface, and so on the form of the ocean, and thus slowly produce changes in its level which may, in some cases, cause an apparent rising or depression of the land.

H. H.

THE EDUCATION OF SIGHT.

As the reader's eyes rest upon this, a very complex impression is conveyed to the mind. He perceives a contrast of light and shade, the white paper and the black ink. The dark portions exhibit various forms, which stand in definite positions with reference to each other and to the reader. The paper lies at a recognized distance from the reader's eye. It has form and size, a certain degree of smoothness, and certain roughnesses indicating lines of print on the reverse side. Further looking will discover a succession of black forms—letters, words, etc.—conveying the ideas now in the writer's mind.

How much of all this is, strictly speaking, seen? How much is the result of ulterior processes?

Paradoxical as it may seem, the reader's eyes report only the first-mentioned contrasts of light and shade; all the rest is extraneous. In other words, when we look at a complex object, say a landscape, the eye distinguishes light and shade only—the situation, direction, distance, form, size, etc., of the several objects which produce lights and shades we have to determine by other means, for the discovery of which we are indebted to the patients of Cheselden, Home, Wardrop, Franz and others, who were born blind and given the power of vision in later years by a surgical operation.

In all these cases, we believe, the cure consisted in the removal of an overlying growth which eclipsed the otherwise perfect organ of vision. In each case the patient was sufficiently mature to report the exact nature of the sensation aroused by the act of sight on the part of a perfect but uneducated eye—uneducated, that is, in respect to motion—and unaided by any knowledge acquired by the other senses. Their experiences, therefore, clearly demonstrate the scope of pure vision in all persons, and also the origin of the ideas of form, size, distance, etc., which seem to arise in our minds through simple seeing.

Of the earliest patient, Cheselden's, it is recorded that "he knew not the shape of anything, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude," and the same is substantially true of all the others.

Ten minutes after his eyes were opened, Home's patient was shown a round piece of card, and was asked the shape of it. He could not tell till he had touched it. The next moment a square card was shown him, and he said it was round like the other. He said the same of a three-cornered card. He was then asked if he could find a corner on the square.

card. It was only by much thinking that he decided that the card had a corner, after which he readily recognised the other three corners.

An exceedingly instructive subject was a lady operated on by Wardrop: she could merely distinguish a very light from a very dark room, so complete was her blindness. At first she saw only patches of light and shade; by degrees she learned the names of colours and was able to distinguish them, though unable to interpret the chaos of colour impressions she received. On the seventh day after the operation she was seen to examine some tea-cups and saucers. She thought them queer, but could not tell what they were till she touched them. Similarly she saw but failed to recognise an orange. On the eighteenth day, a key and a pencil-case, with which she was perfectly familiar by touch, were placed side by side on a table before her; she could not tell which was the pencil-case, which the key. At the end of three weeks she saw a grassplot simply as a large and beautiful patch of green in her field of vision. How far it might be from her she had no idea. Usually in cases of this sort the patient imagines at first that all that he sees touches his eyes, just as objects felt touch the skin.

On the twenty-fifth day Wardrop's patient was taken out in a carriage, and inquired continually as to the meanings of her visual sensations. A person on horseback was vaguely a large object. She asked: "What is that?" of a soldier; and of some ladies wearing red shawls she inquired: "What is that on the pavement, red?"

At the end of six weeks it was found that she had acquired a pretty accurate knowledge of colours and their shades and names, but was unable to judge of distances or of forms, and the sight of all new objects was still very confusing.

Neither was she able, without considerable difficulty and numerous fruitless trials, to direct her eyes to any object; when she attempted to look at anything, she turned her head in various directions until her eye caught the object she was in search of.

That our power of "seeing" solids is also extravisual was clearly shown in the case of Frau's patient. Among the observations reported of this patient, the following applies here:

A solid cube and a sphere, each of four inches diameter, were placed before him, three foot off and at the level of his eye. After attentively examining these bodies, he said he saw a quadrangular and a circular figure, and after some consideration he pronounced the one a square and the other a disc. His eyes were then closed, the cube taken away, and a disc put in its place. On opening his eyes, he observed no difference in these objects, but regarded them both as discs.

The cube was now placed in a somewhat oblique position before the eye, and close beside it a figure cut out of pasteboard representing a plain outline prospect of the cube when in this position; both objects he took to be somewhat like a flat quadrangle.

A pyramid placed before him, with one of its sides turned toward his eye, he saw as a plain triangle. Placed so as to present two of its sides to view, the pyramid was a puzzle. After considering it a long time, he said it was a very extraordinary figure. It was neither a triangle nor a quadrangle, nor a circle; he had no idea of it and could not describe it.

When he took the sphere, cube, and pyramid into his hand he was astonished that he had not recognized them as such by sight, being well acquainted with them by touch.

What these patients had to learn in later life, more fortunate individuals born with unclouded eyes learn in infancy, but so forget the process that the acquirement seems to be innate, a simple function of the unaided eye.

ADULTERATION OF BUTTER.

At a time when nearly all our food and drink that can be manipulated at all by the vendors undergoes a certain amount of doctoring before it reaches the consumer any discovery by which the presence of matter foreign to the natural composition of the article which we wish to procure, is certainly a cause for congratulation. The difficulties surrounding the subject of the adulteration of butter are very great, and have hitherto been deemed almost insuperable, in that there have been no reliable tests of distinguishing between the fatty substances of butter and other fats. Owing to this, the prosecutions taken against dealers under the Adulteration Act have completely failed.

Dr. Hill Hassall, however, has by a series of experiments discovered a test whereby the adulteration of butter may be accurately ascertained. By the result of numerous experiments on "Food, Water, and Air, in their relation to the Public Health," he has shown that although the contrary might be thought

by some, it is no easy matter to determine accurately the extent of adulteration by ascertaining the relative proportions, contained in fats of stearine, palmitine, and oleine, of which but in varying proportions butter and other fats are mainly composed, as it is next to impossible to separate completely the constituent parts of each fat. A certain amount of attention has been given to the subject of the fusing points of butter and other fats, with a view of ascertaining the presence and extent of foreign matter in the former. The manner, nevertheless, in which the melting point of butter and other fats has hitherto been usually determined, has been very inexact, and the method pursued has been such as to render it impossible that the observations of two observers could correspond. Butter and foreign fats, as has been stated, are composed chiefly of palmitine, stearine and oleine, all of which have different melting points. Between the two former the difference is little, the melting point of both being about 63 deg. C., while oleine, of which butter has much larger proportion than of the other two, is liquid at ordinary temperatures and only solidifies at a temperature much below freezing point.

Knowing, therefore, the melting point of any given fat and of its prime constituents, it would appear to be possible to arrive approximately at the percentage composition of that fat and even of a mixture of fats; but Dr. Hassall, not content to rely upon a rule of this kind, which would be vitiated by the presence of volatile acids always found in butter, experimented with actual fats mixed together in certain known proportions. It was found, by a series of observations, that the true melting point of pure butter ranges from 82.8 to 84.3. The mean of the seven observations made was 83.7. As to other fats which are usually employed in the adulteration of butter it was found that the true melting point of bullock, sheep, lamb and pig kidney fat varied from 38.7 to 51.6, the mean being 46.9; of beef, mutton, lamb, veal and pig caul fat, they ranged from 41.1 to 48.6, the mean being 44.8. The fusing point of lard varied from 42.6 to 44.6, the mean being 43.6; while the melting point of beef, mutton and pig dripping varied from 42.3 to 48.2, the mean being 44.6.

From the wide difference between the melting points of butter and the lowest point of fusion of any of the other fats above enumerated, it is plain that the presence of any of the latter, even if introduced in slight quantities in butter, could be discovered by the increased point of fusion of the mixture. This Dr. Hassall has proved by rigidly testing the fusing points of pure butter mixed with each of the above fats respectively, the latter being incorporated in quantities varying from ten, by regular decades, to one hundred per cent. These investigations serve to practically test the adulteration of butter with animal fats, which, with few exceptions, are those used for that purpose. But it is quite possible that the analyst might be confounded by chemical mixtures which might be conceived having the same fusing point as butter; these, however, would in all probability be more expensive in their preparation than the cost of purest butter itself, hence there would be no inducement to use them.

BURIED SECRETS.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BINGLEY'S MUSIC HALL was even fuller than usual when Lord Thorncombe and Dalyell entered it. The hour was between ten and eleven o'clock. The drop-curtain was lowered, there being an interregnum between the performances.

Tobacco smoke in a thick fog filled the room. The odour of foaming beer and cheap liquors pervaded the air. Loud laughter, boisterous voices, the stereotyped utterances of card-players, resounded on every side.

The earl had never been in a place like this before, and he hung back, regarding Dalyell with questioning gaze.

"It's all right," said the young man, coolly, carefully avoiding to address his companion by any title. "I see a table yonder. Come with me!"

He seized the earl's arm and drew him along one of the narrow passages to a small table in a retired corner which commanded an excellent view of the stage.

Thrusting his lordship into an inner seat, he captured one of the waitresses and ordered beer and cigars, giving her a half-sovereign, and bidding her keep the change.

Then he sat down also.

"The beer will be good," he observed, "which is more than can be said for the cigars, but my case is at your service, sir."

The earl was about to decline, but the necessity of seeming like those around them was plainly apparent

and he took a cigar, as did Dalyell, who produced a light.

Both began smoking slowly, keeping their hats on, as seemed the custom here.

The waitresses returned with the beer and the cigars ordered, and disappeared in the cloud of smoke.

Lord Thorncombe, bewildered, peered around him, and presently whispered:

"This is a very low place, is it not?"

"There are several grades lower," replied Dalyell, sententiously. "They are mostly clerks, mechanics, and the like here. A few strangers from the country, a number of sharpers, butcher boys, commo-rial travellers, representatives of all the lower working-classes, and one or two broken down gentlemen."

The earl looked sharply at the girls who waited upon the throng.

They had painted faces and an abundance of false hair, but their dress and demeanour were modest.

"There are no women in the audience," he said. "Do you mean that she is one of the waitresses?"

"No. You will see her presently. She is of higher grade than these, a star performer. She sings—"

"To men like these? In a place like this?"

The earl shuddered.

"You know," said Dalyell, "that you expected to find her in some lowly position. So that the flower is pure and worthy of trans-planting, what does it matter that for a while it blooms in the gutter?"

"How did you happen to know of her? What brought you to a place like this?"

"I dropped in one evening weeks ago," said Dalyell, "with a view to see something of the under side of life. I believe an advertisement attracted me, or brought the place to my notice. I saw the name of 'Mademoiselle Zoe,' with a list of her star performances. I came—again and again. I made her acquaintance. I learned that she was M^{rs} Lorette Montague, or some such name. It was only a week ago that I heard that her real name was supposed to be Flint. Then when I heard Keene's revelation I began to suspect that 'Mademoiselle Zoe' might be your grandchild. To-day, I met the singer in the street. I followed her home, saw where she lived, and made a note of the address. I will take you to see Mrs. Flint as soon as you shall have seen 'Zoe.'"

The earl drew a long, heavy sigh.

"There is more of pain than pleasure in discovering her in a place like this," he said, and Dalyell saw that his proud face was haggard. "A girl can hardly preserve her purity of soul in such an atmosphere as this. Do you hear those oaths? She has to hear them nightly. Do you see those rude bores to the right, these evil-eyed fellows behind us? They look at her, they applaud her, they speak to her perhaps. Piers, I would rather have seen her grave than have found my grandchild in this place!"

"This is weakness, sir, if you will pardon me. She is here, and it is your province to take her to a refined home. You can make what you please of her. She will do you credit, I know. You have not seen her yet!"

The earl's thoughts reverted once more to that patrician beauty he had seen in the park, with her pure, sweet loveliness, and his spirits rose a little.

The tinkle of a bell was heard.

The drop-curtain rose slowly.

The little stage was empty, but only for an instant, a clog-dancer, in a red satin jacket, making his appearance amid a feeble attempt at applause.

Dalyell smoked on composedly. The earl rested his elbows on the table and his chin in his hands.

The clog-dancer gave place to a tumbler, who performed his feats, while the talking and laughing went on in the hall. He disappeared in turn, and now ensued a brief silence. A hush began to pervade the room. The card-players paused, their cards in their hands, and regarded the stage. All was expectation: the "star" of Bingley's was about to dawn.

"Now!" whispered Dalyell.

A woman bounded out upon the stage from a side-wing, and made her bow to the applauding audience—a woman clad in the costume of a ballet-dancer, with pink silk stockings, white kid shoes, and a multitude of tulle skirts, and with a courage by far too low—a woman such as the eyes of the Earl of Thorncombe had never before gazed upon!

He could not see her face distinctly, as she whirled and danced and pirouetted; the rapidity of her movements made him giddy; and, as with Dalyell upon the occasion of the first visit of the latter to this place, he was conscious of little else than waving arms and a great mass of black hair

and billows of white skirts, but he watched her steadily as if fascinated.

The young woman finished her dance, was encircled, and finally made her escape from the stage, flinging back a kiss to the audience.

"That was 'Zoe,'" said Dalyell, calmly.

"And Zoe is—"

"Blanche Berwyn!"

A low, half-suppressed groan escaped the earl's lips. He did not speak again for some time. A burnt-cork minstrel appeared and gave a plantation song, another tumbler exhibited his skill, and then came another hush of expectancy.

"Zoe again," whispered Dalyell.

The rustle of drapery was heard, and "Mademoiselle Zoe" reappeared.

She was dressed in a tawdry-green silk gown, all tinsel and spangles, which extended behind her in a long train, but was still too low at the neck.

She looked coarse and vulgar and fall-blown. Her hard, heavy cheeks were intensely red. Her bold black eyes seemed bolder and blacker than ever.

Her hair was a marvel of braids and puffs and curls. Her big red shoulders were uncovered. She had lost something of the gipsy beauty she had once possessed.

She was a "fine woman," in the usual acceptation of the phrase, being large, heavy, and fully developed, but she was no longer attractive.

Unlimited indulgence in beer and wine and pastry had transformed her into an animal creature, with a fiercer temper than ever, and with apparently less soul than she had formerly possessed.

She sang "The Ratcatcher's Daughter," to the great amusement and delight of her admirers, and followed it with other songs of the same exalted character.

The earl caught his breath sharply.

As soon as she had quitted the stage he whispered, huskily:

"For Heaven's sake, let us get out of here!"

Dalyell sprang up and assisted his lordship out into the fresh air.

They halted in the street by one of the placards displaying a portrait of "Mademoiselle Zoe." The earl turned his back to it in disgust.

"Dalyell," he said, "is there not some mistake? There must be! That girl is not George Berwyn's daughter. There is not a Berwyn trait among her features."

"She resembles her mother."

"My son adored beauty. Could he have married a woman who looked as she does? Impossible. You mean well, Dalyell, but I repeat—there is some frightful mistake!"

"My lord, do not delude yourself. So surely as you live, the girl in yonder music-hall is George Berwyn's orphan daughter and your grandchild and heiress."

"We must see Mrs. Flint immediately. You know her address. Lead the way to her house."

Dalyell hailed a passing hansom, and gave the address. The earl and the schemer were transported to Camberwell Road, and the cab stopped before a brick house in the middle of a long row of similar houses. Dalyell alighted, and assisted his lordship to the ground.

"We may as well dismiss the cab," said the villain. "We may be detained an hour. The woman is undoubtedly at home."

He gave his arm to Lord Thornecombe, and they mounted the steps. Their summons was answered by a neat-looking housemaid, who wore a white cap and white apron.

"Is Mrs. Smith at home?" inquired Dalyell.

The girl assented, and showed them the way upstairs to the front room on the second floor. Dalyell knocked at the door, and Mrs. Flint opened it.

She started back before them, in affected alarm. She had learned her part well. The two gentlemen followed up her retreat, entering her room.

It was a neat little parlour, lighted by a large lamp. The woman had been sewing, and her work was upon the table where she had hastily thrown it.

"This must be some mistake, gentlemen," said Mrs. Flint, betraying no recognition of Dalyell. "I do not know you."

Dalyell closed the door and placed his back against it. He seemed the incarnation of retributive justice. He acted his part so well, as did the woman, that the earl, suspecting no collusion between them, accepted the situation at its face.

"If you do not know us, madam, we know you," declared Dalyell. "You have led us a fine game of hide and seek during the past few months, but we have discovered you at last, and the best thing you can do is to own up the truth, and answer the questions we ask of you. Who are you?"

"I am Mrs. Smith, a respectable widow, sir."

"You are Joanna Flint, formerly Joanna Ryan!" cried Dalyell. "No denial. We have proofs."

The woman seemed frightened and trembling. She sank down into the nearest chair, and put her apron to her face.

"Speak!" said the earl, sternly. "Are you Joanna Flint, formerly Joanna Ryan?"

"Oh, sir, I never did any one any harm. I am Joanna Flint, but—"

"You were formerly Mrs. Ryan?"

"Yes, sir, but—"

"Peace, woman!" said the earl, in a tone of command that averted her. "Answer the questions I put to you, and you shall not be harmed. Did you ever live as servant in the family of Mr. George Berwyn in Australia?"

"Yes, sir," replied the woman. "He was a gentleman-farmer, and me and my first worked for him, and Mrs. Berwyn, and a nicer gentleman and lady, one could not wish to work for. But they died out there."

"They died," said the earl, "but they left a little girl, their only child. What became of her? Where is she?"

The woman began to tremble in reality. The earl's eagle eye seemed to penetrate to her inmost being. He was so stern, so terrible, that her awe of him grew greater every moment. And the question he asked her seemed to have an unaccountable effect upon her, actually terrifying her.

"There was no one to look after the child," she said, "so I took charge of her—"

"I know all that, how you separated from your husband and went to Sidney, and afterwards sailed for England with two children in your charge. Whose was the other child?"

"It was the daughter of an old friend I met out there. He was named Jack Cartwright. He was a convict."

The visitors recoiled.

"And this convict's child you brought to England with you—Blanche Berwyn?"

"Yes, sir. I called them both by my name of Ryan. One was Joanna Ryan, and the other was Lolette Ryan. When I returned to England I was a widow. The Cartwright child I gave away. I kept the other. I married again; I became a widow the second time; I have worked hard; I have been very poor; but I have never parted with Lolette."

"Is Lolette Blanche Berwyn?"

The woman's features twitched nervously, but she answered, raising her cunning eyes:

"She is. I'll swear to it."

"Where is she now?"

"She is at Bingley's Music Hall. They know her there as Mademoiselle Zoe. She dances and sings. I have done the best for her that I could. I never expected her relations would turn up. I have educated her to the best of my ability. She can write her name, and said up a column of figures. If you'll give her time, and as to dancing and singing, there she's great. She's a good girl, is Lolly. Her morals couldn't be better if she lived in Park Lane, or such."

"Why have you always run away from Mr. Lockham if you've done the best you could for the girl?" asked the earl.

The woman seemed staggered for an instant, then recovering herself she answered:

"Because, sir, I feared he would take Lolly from me, and she is my only means of support. She earns enough to keep us both in comfort. If she were taken from me, what would become of me?"

The sound of the front door closing had startled them all. Mrs. Flint sprang up as if galvanised.

"That's Lolly!" she exclaimed.

"My lord!" whispered Dalyell, moved for the supreme moment of the evening, "here she comes, your grandchild, Miss Berwyn!"

The door opened and Lolette, in shabby fiery and boisterous spirits, came bounding in!

CHAPTER XXV.

LORD THORNECOMBE controlled his terrible excitement and agitation with a stern and powerful effort, but his breathing was hard and quick and his face was ghastly in its whiteness.

Piers Dalyell stood somewhat behind the earl, the incarnation of sinister joy and triumph.

Mrs. Flint, struggling with a terror she could not quite conceal, her cunning eyes having an expression of cowardly shrinking, stood in a half-crouching position.

Lolette halted, her bold black eyes surveying one after another of the group.

She betrayed no recognition of Dalyell. She too had learned her lesson thoroughly.

Dalyell had secretly hoped that she would show some refinement of words and manner. He had informed her that she was the granddaughter and

heiress of an earl, and had implored her to endeavour to create a favourable impression upon Lord Thornecombe. But it seemed to the schemer that Lolette was coarse, vulgar, and more self-assertive than ever.

In truth, the young woman was angry with Dalyell for having married her, leaving her in ignorance of her expectations. She said to herself that if he had not induced her to marry him she might in time have won some wealthy peer. He had told her the whole truth, that he was poor, and had induced her out and made her his wife in order to secure her fortune to himself. She felt a sudden hatred towards him, and she could show her anger in no other way than making herself as disagreeable as possible in the presence of Lord Thornecombe.

No thought of her own interests restrained her. The earl could not contest or set aside her claims upon him. As she was his grandchild, so she was his heiress, and he must take her just as she was.

"What's up?" she demanded, addressing Mrs. Flint. "Was not this evening?" And what do they want here at this time of the night?"

"They are gentlemen who have called to see you, Lolly," said Mrs. Flint, with an imploring glance.

Lolette threw off her velvet shawl, and, gallily-trimmed hat, and stood before them, burly, heavy, and large of frame, her red cheeks redder than ever, her eyes bolder and brighter than ever, and her countenance wearing an expression which can be described in no other term than brazen.

She looked at Dalyell expectantly, but fixed her eyes upon the stately earl with something of admiration.

"Well," she said, "if you want anything of me, speak out. Don't be bashful. The old lady here seems to forget to introduce us. I am Lolette Ryan. Who are you?"

Lord Thornecombe turned to Mrs. Flint, who was rapidly whispering injunctions to Lolette to behave differently.

"Ma'am," he said, "is this the girl who has been known as your daughter Lolette?"

"She is, sir."

"Is she the daughter of George Berwyn and his wife, whom you served in Australia?"

His voice rang through the room like a trumpet, but clear and stern as the voice of an accusing angel.

Mrs. Flint shook visibly and cowered under his eagle glance, but she answered as before:

"She is, sir. She is Blanche Berwyn."

Lolette stared, then burst into a coarse laugh.

"Am I not Lolette Ryan?" she cried. "Am I not your daughter, all body?"

"No, Lolly. I took you from your dead parents, a little pauper child," said Mrs. Flint, putting her apron to her eyes. "I have been a mother to you. I have watched over you faithfully, given you what education I could, and kept you like a lady. I never expected any of your relations to turn up, and I lavished my money upon you like water. I couldn't have done better for you if you had been my own."

"But you are not mine. I must give you up; it's hard, but I must. I have got one, a lone, poor widow, very hard. This gentleman has come to take you away. He is your relation."

"What relation?" demanded Lolette.

"He is your grandfather," said Dalyell, his voice smooth as oil. "He is the Earl of Thornecombe. And you are the Honourable Blanche Berwyn, his grandchild and heiress."

"Not so fast," began the earl. "Lolette ran forward with a little shriek, and precipitated herself upon his lordship."

The mingled odours of cheap perfume and stale tobacco smoke which clung to her caused the earl to grimace involuntarily.

He repulsed her quickly, with gentleness, but with firmness.

"Not so fast," he observed, coolly. "I cannot accept the situation so soon. I am not thoroughly convinced."

"Not convinced!" repeated Dalyell.

"Not convinced!" echoed Lolette.

"No, I am not convinced that this girl is my granddaughter."

"Perhaps," said Lolette, with a significant menace, "a suit in a court of law might convince you that I am your granddaughter. This woman has confessed to the truth. And as for me, I have always suspected that I was somebody of consequence. I have always known that I was made of different clay from Mrs. Flint. I haven't held my head so high for nothing. I shall let everyone know of my good fortune," she continued, gleefully. "I shall make a speech to-morrow night at Bingley's, and tell them all that I am the granddaughter of the Earl of Thornecombe, and that I am the Honourable Blanche Berwyn. I'll stand there, too, all round! Oh, my! isn't it glorious!"

She gave utterance to a boisterous laugh. Delyell made gestures to her from behind the earl's chair.

Mrs. Flint whispered to her in Heaven's name to be quiet. But the demon of contrariness had taken possession of the dame, and she looked defiantly at her mentors, saying to Mrs. Flint:

"Oh, shut up! He's my grandfather fast enough, and he can't help himself. You don't seem very affectionate, grandfather! You don't seem glad to see me!" and she turned her attention to the old lord. "You are right, bobby, and I have taken a fancy to you at sight. We'll soon be the best of friends. If I am not lady enough to suit you that's soon remedied. A few new dresses will set me up so that you will know me from a duchess!"

The earl arose leaning upon his staff.

"Woman," he said, in a deep, commanding voice, addressing Mrs. Flint, "I cannot believe that this girl is of my blood. I did not expect to find my granddaughter educated. I supposed you were poor and had brought her up as a daughter of your own. But I have faith in blood. I believe that my grandchild, wherever she may be, and however she may have been reared, will show some traces in her bearing, looks, and manner, of the centuries of careful training that have been bestowed upon her ancestors. Her father was a gentleman, gentle in very truth; her mother was a gentlewoman, a lady by birth and education. Of such parents, do offspring such as she come?" and he pointed one long forefinger at Lolette.

"I refuse to believe it!"

"My lord," said Delyell, hastily, "your objection is unworthy of you. People are the creatures of circumstances, not of inheritance. This girl has been trained among poor people. She has grown like her associates. The gentle instincts of her race may lie dormant within her—"

"They certainly lie dormant if they exist at all," said the earl, dryly.

"I swear that she is Blanche Berwyn!" cried Mrs. Flint. "My lord, I swear it!"

"Oaths seem to come easily from your lips," said the earl. "Swear, if you wish—but swear, if you can, by the Heaven above, at whose bar of judgment you must some day stand, that this girl is the child of George Berwyn and his wife. Do you swear?"

"I do."

Mrs. Flint spoke hastily, her eyes downcast.

"You swear," cried Delyell, "by your hopes of a hereafter that this girl is Blanche Berwyn? You hope that you may be consigned to eternal perdition if she is not the real and true heiress of Lord Thornecombe?"

The woman hesitated, shock yet more visible, and answered, in a low, frightened voice:

"Yes, yes, I do."

"Enough!" said the earl. "I will not decide to-night. I have something further to say. I will send around my lawyer in the morning—"

Mrs. Flint uttered an exclamation and moved away towards the window. It almost seemed as if she were seized with some thought of flight.

"My lord," remonstrated Delyell, "can you not settle it to-night? The girl is undoubtedly your descendant. With her singular nature she might do something before Keneo's arrival that would annoy you hereafter. She might proclaim herself—"

Lord Thornecombe turned abruptly to Mrs. Flint.

"Where is that other girl?" he asked.

"What other girl?" she said, bewildered.

"You brought two from Australia. There is one. Where is the other?"

"I gave her away, my lord. She was not Blanche Berwyn. She was the Cartwright child."

"That may be," declared the earl, "but I will never accept this child as my granddaughter until I have seen the two girls together. Never! I will move heaven and earth but that I find that other child! And then I will decide between them."

Lolette was furious.

"Do you mean you won't own me?" she ejaculated.

"You can't help yourself! I'll find your tombstone and present myself there to-morrow morning. I'll tell the servants I am Blanche Berwyn. I'll defy you to put me out. You can't cheat me out of my rights. You'll find that I know a thing or two. I'll take Mrs. Flint with me. I'll make the biggest row you ever heard if you refuse to acknowledge me."

"You had better yield, my lord," whispered Delyell. "The girl is truly—"

The earl commanded silence by a gesture.

His stormy eyes had a sudden gleam in them as of lightning.

"The matter can be settled to-night," he said, "beyond all shadow of doubt! I can know in one moment if the Berwyn blood runs in the veins of this woman, or if she is an impostor!"

He strode towards Lolette, caught her right

arm, and tore away the flimsy sleeve to the shoulder.

The arm was red and brawny, but without speck or flaw.

The earl's face lighted up with an infinite joy and relief.

"Look!" he said. "Look, Delyell. The arm of Blanche Berwyn had a scar upon it just below the shoulder, where she was burned in her infancy. The nurse declared that that scar would remain through life. And more! That scar occurred just below a slender, cross-shaped birth-mark. This girl has neither scar nor birth-mark. She is not Blanche Berwyn!"

He flung Lolette's arm from him and smiled in triumph.

Better never to find his grandchild than to find her like this woman.

Delyell looked in horror upon Mrs. Flint.

"Woman, confess the truth!" said the earl.

"You are found out in your wickedness. If you wish to escape the penalty of the law, tell the whole truth!"

Mrs. Flint, terrified at his stern and awful looks, fell upon her knees in abject misery.

"Oh, my lord, have mercy!" she cried. "Have mercy!"

"She is not Blanche Berwyn!"

The woman cast a swift glance of affright in the direction of Delyell, who seemed turned into a statue.

"No, my lord," she moaned. "She is not Blanche Berwyn!"

"Who is she?"

Mrs. Flint waited and wrung her hands, but her answer came, amid a tempest of sobs:

"She is Mary Cartwright, the daughter of Jack Cartwright, who was a convict!"

To be continued.

THE DEFAMATION OF THE DEAD.

OUR English Henry, it appears, considered critically, was rather an affectionate husband than otherwise; and all the credit is imputed to Mary of England, the naughtiness attributed to Mary of Scotland, the poisonings associated with the fame of Catherine de Medici by M. Dumas, the treacheries laid to the charge of Napoleon by Sir Walter Scott, and the posterity of Jeffreys himself, or even Scrooge, may hope for a reversal of the historical attainder—a thing all the more possible in an age which denies that Joan of Arc was ever burnt at all, that William Tell ever existed, that an Emperor ever picked up Titian's pencil, that Elizabeth assassinated Henry IV., and that our Queen Elizabeth ever poisoned any Rosamond Clifford.

Allowing all this, it must be asked whether no statute of limitations, with reference to the dead, is to be recognized? Whether special damage should be proved? Thus, is it libellous to quote Junius in re, "a too powerful and infamous minister," Swift in his universal slanders on mankind, an American author on Byron, Shelley, or Spenser, Haydon or Hazlitt—whom he called "a singular mixture of friend and fiend," or Macaulay on Sir Elijah Impey? Thus, again, is the injury pleaded to be limited to cases like these? Sir Nathaniel Wraynall insinuated, in his Memoirs, that the Empress Catherine of Russia, and the Duke of Wurttemberg—both being dead when the second edition of the calumny appeared—of conspiring to poison the duke's first wife, Augusta of Brunswick. The offence was expiated in Newgate. Were the representatives of George Nassau Olvering disparaged, in name or position by the posthumous assertion that he was a man "viciously depraved"? A jury said yes—de libellis famosis, as the clerk of the court put it. The article, it was declared, published in the "World" of that day, "inspired to retribution."

The affairs Abbeville and Vevay belong to a category altogether different. In the one, the Chevalier de la Barre was convicted, innocently, of mutilating a crucifix under brutal circumstances, and his memory was, after many years, exonerated. The sisters of Vevay, stigmatized as murderers, had the confession of their innocence engraved upon their tombstones. In their case, none lived to suffer or to benefit from either the slander or its revocations. Turning to a different class, however, we find an attack on King William IV. constructed as one on his surviving ministers, just as when it was said of a parson or gentleman whom, in fear of his grand-children, we dare not name, that he had obtained a knighthood "by vile and perfidious means."

But now, are epistolary defamations or caricatures? Is it not posthumous defamation of the rankiest degree, and cowardly, like every other kind of pelting at a caput mortuum, as though it were that of a regicide on Temple-bar, to climb upon a gravestone, "in this tomb all villainies doth lie" or, as in the memorial of the astrologer Lilly, "ye

infamie of ye English nation?" Hoist in his work on the law, declares that to erect a miniature gallows over a grave is libel.—"St. James's Magazine."

ONLY A TRIFLE.

TRIFLES have before now influenced the fate of nations. The apocryphal story of Newton and the fall of the apple may well be accepted as a typical illustration of the singular power of trifles to direct our minds and start us on the high road to purposes of which we have heretofore not even so much as dreamed. Sir Walter Scott owned to Southey that nothing but his lameness had prevented him from entering the army. He had sprained his foot when a child while running round a room. This was a trifle at the time—an insignificant accident; but its consequences were far from trifling to the world.

Byron's club foot is held by many writers to have had a great deal to do with his genius. A trifle—not indeed to the sufferer, whose perception could not stretch beyond the limits of the living hour, but a trifle viewed from the distance at which we survey his life—preserved Goldsmith for that intellectual world he was born to beautify and illuminate. "They found him," says Mr. Foster, "not qualified to be a surgeon's mate, and left him qualified to heal the wounds and abridge the sufferings of all the world." To the reading aloud of an ode by Malherbe the French owe the works of La Fontaine. On hearing that ode, "I, too, am a poet!" he exclaimed, and the inspiration that made his real life dated from that moment.

"The Beggar's Opera" owes its existence to a casual remark of Swift, who thought that a Newgate pastoral might make a pretty, odd thing; and the origin of the English lyric drama may be assigned to a trifle. A gentleman stole a lock of Miss Arabella Fernon's hair. This was a trifle. The insult, as it was deemed, estranged two families. Pope was asked to write a poem in order to make a jest of the quarrel and laugh the angry families into friendship. The fruit of the trifle was "The Rape of the Lock." Charles Dickens, in his youth, decided to go upon the stage, and would have done so had he not sighted with a bad cold on the very day of his first rehearsal. He therefore postponed his "appearance" until the next season. Soon afterward he made a literary hit, and then abandoned the idea of going on the stage. Thus the trifle of a bad cold saved him from the stage, for English literature, one of its greatest, most honest, most single-hearted, most precious cultivators.

DISCOVERY OF AN ANCIENT MANUSCRIPT.—An important discovery has just been made at the abbey of Grotto Ferrate, near Frosinone. It consists of the copy of a manuscript of Strabo, more ancient than all the others known of that Greek geographer, and which fills up many lacunae in the text which the Hellenists had hitherto used. Some Sicilian monks, driven from their country, and who, at the invitation of Otto III, took refuge in that monastery in 1002, took with them a number of valuable manuscripts in Greek, which they used, but kept carefully from the knowledge of others. These treasures were long lay buried until the learned Cardinal Angelo Mai came to make research. His investigations were continued by Father Giuseppe Gessa, and in the course of his operations he had the good fortune to find a palimpsest, under the writing of which (a text of the Old Testament of the eleventh century) appeared other characters which had been effaced, but which, by the aid of chemical reagents, can easily be re-established. The original of that ancient writing is the work of Strabo, in three columns, in uncial letters, and continuous.

It may be curious and useful to our War Office to know how they conduct business at the American War Office. Here is the information, to enable our officials, to follow example:—Last April a fine-looking clerk in an hour of despondency enlisted in the army. He was engaged to be married to a very handsome lady of eighteen, and when she heard of it, her distress can only be imagined, for a common soldier she could not wed. Her father did everything in his power to have him released, but without effect. The young lady then took the matter in hand. She saw General Logan, and with his signature to a petition for a discharge, forwarded it to Washington. In due time the answer came stating that the prayer could not be granted. Learning that General Belknap, Secretary of War, was in the city, she got a letter of introduction to him. She determined to call on General Belknap at the Grand Pacific. He granted her an audience, heard her story, satisfied himself the young man would make her a good husband, and wrote out a discharge. When she asked the general how could she repay him he gallantly replied, "With a kiss," which she gave him. She returned, drew her future out, the father settled a farm on them, they are married; and the wife prays for the War Office and the general repeatedly.



[THE PERFECT HAND.]

THE MYSTERIOUS RING.

It was a large, dimly lighted apartment. In the centre of the room stood a painter's easel; and over the canvas which sat upon it fell a piece of crimson drapery. The walls were hung with pictures and sketches of various subjects—here and there displaying in remote places a rough but masterly outline in charcoal.

The artist stood with folded arms, musing. He was tall and well made. His long dark hair rested in heavy masses upon his broad shoulders, and a thick moustache curled gracefully above his finely chiselled lip. He was attired in a loose black velvet robe, with flowing sleeves, laced at the sides. On his head he wore a purple smoking-cap of the same material, ornamented with gold.

The name of this handsome and picturesque-looking person was Paul St. Jeust—an Italian, who had left his native hills when a mere boy, and wandered bare-footed over the long rough road to where the spires of Rome stood glittering in the warm sunshine beneath the deep blue sky.

Of an enthusiastic mind, he longed for something beyond what his home and its associations afforded—and yet it would have been difficult for him to have defined accurately the nature of his desires. He felt his soul stirring with nameless aspirations—hopes fraught with visions of a golden future of fame, if not of fortune.

After he had been a week in the capital he apprenticed himself to a painter of little renown, and rendered himself useful by grinding colours, employing his spare moments in practising with the pencil. It was not long before Paul evinced a decided talent for art; and one or two small pictures painted by him, attracting the attention of a gentleman of wealth, who was then visiting the city, were purchased by him at large prices,

and laid the stepping-stone to subsequent good fortune.

Constant association with men of his own taste and pursuit—wise, bearded veterans, whose art was to them religion, even life itself—tended to develop within him the germ of its existence, which, spreading out branch and twig, rendered his whole being subservient to it.

Paul was standing before his easel. Dropping his folded arms, he advanced and removed the draperies from his work.

His eyes rested with a dissatisfied expression upon a face, beautiful, oval, with delicately moulded features of faultless regularity—paraded by a queenliness of expression which is the offspring of a noble mind. Eyes blue as violets, shaded by long brown lashes, curved with a touch of pride; a mouth, the rich ripe lips of which were slightly parted, displaying all the sweetness of a true woman's nature; a nose, delicate, and a particle removed from a straight line; a full white chin; cheeks, slightly tinted, like the faint blush on a peach; a brow of marble, and around the slender ear heavy masses of chestnut hair, worn smoothly, and without ornament. Amidst all this was a semblance of what is heavenly, and just enough of earth to make it real, and you have Paul's picture.

He shook his head.

"Ah! that hand! I can never paint it to suit me, without a model, and I doubt if I can find one beautiful enough."

Turning to a table which stood in a corner, he took from it his pallet and commenced placing upon it the necessary colours. Here some pure white—next to it some yellow—there a patch of red, another of brown and another of blue.

He then took a brush from the same place, and with a little oil rubbed a thin, brownish colour on the shadow side of the outlined hand.

"That will do for an underground," said he. "I can never find the hand I want. There is Paulina

Lethale—but here is too material. Honoria Desseau—delicate, but rather meagre. Perhaps Eugene Latille can get me a model. I'll ask him."

He removed the picture from his easel, and put another more incomplete in its place. Over the surface of this he passed thin glazes of colour, warming it up here—making a shadow cooler and more pearly in tone—scraping away a little with his pallet knife, but always turning to the other canvas, as if all interest was centred in that.

In the evening Paul consulted his friend, Eugene Latille, about the models, and he promised to send him several on the morrow.

The next day Paul was besieged. The first comer was a tall, dark woman, with black hair and eyes—her hand was too large, and not fair enough.

That of the second was small and white, but the fingers were a shade too broad and rather flat.

The third was a thick-set woman—hers was almost faultless, with the exception of the thumb, which was short, denoting a coarse nature.

The fourth was a well-shaped woman, with light hair and black eyes—hers was fair, but the fingers were too long, and looked treacherous.

The fifth was a young girl—her hand was unformed, and only passably good.

In vain did Paul place them in every possible position, in order to hide their faults, or exhibit their good points. None suited him, and he was obliged to dismiss each successive applicant.

About two hours after the departure of the last the artist heard a knock at his door. It was a timid, gentle knock. Stepping to the sill, he discovered a female figure, dressed in faded garments, with a ragged shawl drawn closely round her and a thick veil covering her face.

She stretched forth her hand as she entered the studio. Paul looked at it in amazement—then in admiration. It was very beautiful—dimpled, small, round and white as snow, with delicate blue veins, taper fingers and pinkish-coloured nails. Handling it as if it was gold, so daintily did it appear, Paul placed the slender wrist upon the cushioned arm of the chair, and it assumed without any adjustment the very position he desired.

Seizing his pallet, he endeavoured to imitate the exquisite colours, the delicate light and shade that pervaded it. Where the sunbeams fell it was a nameless tint—not white, not yellow, hardly a sign of red, but an invisible mingling of sunbeam and loveliness. Farther round, towards the darker side, it was the faintest and most transparent violet; with a play of tender green filling and enlivening it, while the shadow was an indefinable rose-colour, with a pale golden reflection.

Every artist knows that a hand is the hardest thing in the world to paint—so Paul found it. He painted and repainted, touched and retouched, and finally scraped it all out, when he discovered that the time was up and his model must be dismissed.

"I cannot paint it to-day," he said. "I shall have to trouble you to come again to-morrow at the same time."

The model arose and was gone.

Paul sat looking at the place she had occupied as if it possessed some strange fascination over him.

Close to where her feet had been he beheld a rose, somewhat crushed and faded, and here and there a loose leaf. He stooped and picked it up, gathering the leaves together in his hands; and, taking a small box from his pocket, placed them and the rose in it and returned it to its place. He then covered his work with his drapery, cleaned his pallet and brushes, and sought the house of Eugene Latille.

"Ah, Paul!" said the old man. "Glad to see you. Did any of the models I sent please you?"

"Please me?" echoed Paul. "It was beautiful—more than beautiful—it was perfect!"

Eugene opened his eyes in wonder at the enthusiasm of his friend.

"What can he mean?" thought he. He knew that Paul was not one likely to admire that which was not really beautiful, and not one of those whom he had sent was likely to call forth, in his estimation, so much praise.

"Such colour!" said Paul; "such beautiful taper fingers, such exquisite delicacy!"

The old man's face became as animated as that of the speaker.

"Who was she? What was she like?" cried he.

"I don't know. I only saw her hand. She kept her face veiled," answered Paul.

"That was strange," remarked the other. "Could you form no idea of her appearance?"

"None whatever," replied the young man. "But she must be beautiful—such a hand!"

Eugene shook his head, with a puzzled expression of countenance.

"See here," said Paul; "she dropped this," taking from his pocket the box, and showing the rose to his companion.

"It's very curious."

And old Eugene shook his head and looked even more puzzled.

Paul returned the rose to its place, and the two went out together.

Down the narrow, quaint old street in which Eugene lived they went, to a quiet, unpretending restaurant, hung with fanciful signs. The room which they entered opened on to the street, and was exceedingly picturesque in its appointments. Seated around numerous tables, ranged along the wall, were bearded, grave-looking men, whose appearance harmonized with that of the apartment. They welcomed Eugene and Paul with a degree of adorn which could hardly have been equalled had they been all brothers meeting after a lapse of years.

"Anything new?" said a slender, fair-haired youth to Paul.

"Nothing but a model whom I have had sitting for me to-day. A strange, mysterious thing it is too, she was veiled—but such a hand! I never saw its equal. Ah! such colour—such beautiful colour—such an exquisite hand, Andrea."

"What is that?" said a dark, black-bearded man.

"There is not a perfect hand in Rome."

"Wait till you see this one," answered Paul.

"You will think differently then."

"Tut!" said the other; "you have been dreaming."

The next day, at the same hour, Paul's model visited him.

She was veiled as before; she took the seat prepared for her and dropped her hand over the arm of the chair in precisely the position it had occupied on the previous occasion.

Paul set to work with new ardour. The extreme loveliness of the picture inspired him with fresh power over his colours. Hues which might have rivalled the rainbow in purity were fixed by unerring touches upon his canvas. Rich, transparent lakes—golden browns—coral, silvery grays—delicate greens, almost invisible in themselves, typified the real in its image.

The young painter stepped back to view his work at a distance, nodding to the model to relieve her position.

Having examined it for some time from various points—now advancing—now retreating a step or two—he turned to where she had been sitting, and beheld the seat vacant.

So rapt had he been in the contemplation of his picture that he had not noticed her departure, nor had she allowed him opportunity to pay her the price of the sittings.

Near to him where he found the rose, and about half-way between the door of his room and the dais or raised platform on which the sitter's chair was placed, he perceived a ring, the stone of which was so brilliant as to gather the light, which entered from a small high window, to a focus in itself, and cast it about in silver, arrow-like lines upon every object in the apartment. He stooped and picked it up. The circular part was elaborately chased, and so small that it would not fit the top of his little finger. Paul looked at it again and again—placing it first in the light, where it almost blinded him, then in the shadow, where he examined it very closely; and at last, wrapping it carefully in cotton, he placed it along with the rose, and hastened to the house of his friend Eugene.

"What is it now, Paul?"

"I have something to show you, Eugene," he answered.

"What is it?"

"This," returned Paul, taking the ring from his pocket.

"Ah! what is it?" said the old man, placing his hand to his eyes. "I'm almost blinded. What is it?"

"It's a ring," replied Paul.

"A ring! Bring it here and let me look at it," and Eugene drew Paul into a dark corner. "So it is, so it is—what's this? A diamond, of course, how very brilliant it is," said he, turning to the light. "It's too much for my old eyes. Where did you get it?"

"I found it on the floor after my model had gone."

Eugene stepped back and looked at Paul in silent astonishment.

"Is it possible? Why, Paul, who can she be? A model with such a ring as that!"

"It must be hers; there has been no one else in my room to-day."

"Are you sure? There is some mystery here. Why did you not ask her name?"

"I never thought of it," returned Paul. "I was so busy painting."

"Ay, ay!" said Eugene, and, turning to his easel, where a picture of the Madonna stood, nearly finished, he imparted a higher colour to the forehead.

"You have not dined yet?"

"Not yet. Let us dine together," said Paul, and the two went away in company.

"Say nothing of the ring," whispered Eugene, as they entered the restaurant.

The same bearded men sat round the different tables and the same hearty welcome was extended to the new-comers.

"How is that beautiful model?" asked Andrea.

"I didn't say she was beautiful," said Paul, blushing slightly and betraying some confusion. "I said that her hand was beautiful."

"That's enough to captivate an enthusiastic painter," said Andrea, shyly.

Paul blushed again.

"Have you heard the news?" said a voice behind a forest of grisly beard.

"What is it?" cried all, in a breath.

"Count Carrari's daughter," said the voice, drawing nearer to the central table, at which the larger number were seated.

"What of the count's daughter?" cried Andrea.

"Do you mean Angelica?"

"Yes, Angelica," replied the other.

"Isn't she beautiful?" said the young man;

"she's divine—perfectly divine!"

"What of Angelica?" demanded half a score of voices.

"It is rumoured," continued the voice, "that she has lost a jewel, which was presented to her by Cardinal Sanzio."

"It was a brooch, was it not?" demanded one.

"No, a ring. It was given her, as I said before, by Cardinal Sanzio, when she was quite a child; and an old woman, an angur, who had been her nurse, declared at the time that the possession of it would influence her future life. Some say that this old woman predicted that should the jewel be lost she would marry the finder of it."

"Paul," said Eugene, when they once more got into the street, "can it be possible? But no, it cannot be—"

"What—that the ring should be hers?"

"Yes; that was what I was thinking about."

"I thought of it myself at the time," remarked Paul; "but it hardly seems possible, and yet—"

"And yet what?" inquired Eugene, when they had walked some distance in silence.

"I will go and see," answered his friend.

When Paul returned home that evening he lit his lamp, and, taking the ring once more from his pocket, proceeded to examine it even more closely than he had done before.

The great brilliancy of the stone, which seemed to contain every colour of the rainbow merged into one, and that one irradiated with blinding light, prevented Paul from discovering any meaning in the curious ornamentation of the other parts, until he had entirely obscured it with his finger. After diligent search he made out an A, and afterward, all the other letters of "Angelica."

Feeling convinced that it was none other than the jewel alluded to in the restaurant, he determined on restoring it the following day. He could make no satisfactory explanation of the mysterious circumstances which surrounded it. At one time he fancied that his model must have found it—at another that it must have been stolen by her; but no! he wrangled the beautiful hand. Then he thought it must have been the count's daughter who had sat to him—but that seemed preposterous. Account for it he could not, so he determined finally to dream over it, and retired for the night.

The next morning found St. Joust in a spacious room profusely decorated with statues, and ornamented with magnificent columns of immense height and circumference. The floor was composed of fragments of marble, of various shapes and colours, making a rich mosaic work of indescribable splendour.

After stating his errand the artist was conducted by a servant to the apartment of Angelica. She was seated upon a couch of ivory inlaid with tortoise-shell, partly covered with cloth of gold. Her hair, a rich chestnut, was worn in plain masses, partially revealing an ear of exquisite shape. Her large eyes, shaded by long, dark lashes, were as blue as an Italian sky at midday, and her lips were full and red. Her arm, which was round and dazzling white, terminated in a hand wondrously beautiful.

Paul looked at her in silent amazement. That face—no wonder Andrea had spoken enthusiastically of her.

Angelica! She was well named. That hand—surely he had seen that hand. The recollection of the one he had painted paled as he looked upon that of Angelica, as a star loses itself in the sun's light. And yet, they must be one; but how much more beautiful than even he had thought it. He raised his eyes again to her face—it was suffused with crimson, as if a thousand blood-red roses had dissolved themselves in dew and spilt it upon her.

"Lady," faltered Paul, "I have a jewel in my possession which I believe is the property of your ladyship. I hardly know how I became possessed of it, rather than that I found it upon the floor of my room after the departure of a model who sat for yesterday."

Her face grew paler, and she motioned with her hand for him to desist. Then, bidding the attendants retire, she extended her hand toward him, and, in a sweet, subdued voice, bade him place the ring upon it. Kneeling at her feet, he took the jewel from his pocket and slipped it upon one of the rosy fingers. The contact sent a thrill of pleasure through his frame. In a moment of transport he pressed her hand passionately to his lips—another, and he was dragged roughly from the apartment and ejected from the palace gates.

Paul's brain was in a whirl of confusion and bewilderment. Above him was the blue sky, and before him was a stately mansion; but not a soul could be seen.

Slowly, and burning with rage, he retraced his steps, and again entered his studio. He flung himself upon his lounge, covering his face with his hands. While in this position a rap was heard at his door, and in walked Eugene.

"Why, Paul, my boy, what's the matter?"

"Nothing," said Paul, starting up.

"Something," said Eugene. "What have you done with the ring?"

"I took it to the owner."

"To Angelica, Paul! You went to her then?"

"To be sure I did," answered the young man.

"And did you see her?"

"Yes."

"Come, Paul, be more communicative; who else did you see?"

"I saw myself outside shortly after," answered Paul, in a surly tone.

"You didn't stay long, then. Come, come, boy, tell me all about it. I am anxious to understand this matter."

"Well, then," said Paul, "it was she who was here yesterday. I am convinced of that; there is not another hand like hers in all Rome, although what could have brought her here I can't imagine. A strange whim perhaps. As I said before, I went and returned it, and—"

"And what then?" as Paul hesitated.

"That is all I know."

"Paul, Paul," said Eugene, shaking his heavy head, "I'm afraid you have been guilty of some indiscretion. Are you sure you haven't been in love with a certain pretty hand for the last two or three days, and that you didn't kiss that pretty hand this morning? Paul, Paul, you can't serve two mistresses. I have served but one all my life, and that one is my art, and she has never forsaken me; and sooner than put my faith in woman, if that faith lessened my devotion to my true mistress—which it surely would, for I am very human, and women are all lovely in my eyes—I would drown myself in the Tiber."

Paul put on his hat and looked as if he were about to act upon his friend's suggestion.

"You are right, Eugene," he said; "it is all true, as far as I know."

"Come along, then—the sooner you get over it the better." And Eugene led the way to the restaurant.

"Now, Paul," said he, when they had seated themselves at one of the tables, "I wouldn't drown myself just yet. The count's daughter is a little bit out of your reach—therefore I should advise you to let off that tender feeling of yours through the end of your paint-brush."

Paul sighed and raised his ale to his lips. In its golden depths he fancied he saw the faces of fifty Angelicas looking out lovingly at him from every foaming bubble.

However philosophical may have been Eugene's advice, Paul failed to act upon it. Doubtless, if he had, he would have enjoyed more peace of mind than we have reason to suppose he did. He spent most of his time in dreaming and wandering about in an absent kind of manner. His work remained untouched, and a certain box which contained a faded rose was often resorted to by him for comfort.

The young artists declared that Paul was getting idle and losing his ambition; the older ones shook their gray heads and whispered that he was in love—they spoke from experience, no doubt. Certain it is his actions afforded sufficient grounds for their belief.

He was known to wander about at night until every light was extinguished, and the banks of the Tiber were not unfamiliar with his presence.

This state of things was very likely to last; at any rate there was no abatement, but rather an increase of these symptoms.

"Paul," said Eugene, one evening, as they were sitting together, "why do you not exhibit your picture?"

"It is not finished yet."

"Not finished! I thought it was. What more do you intend doing to it?"

"I am not satisfied with the hand."

Eugene looked at Paul wonderingly for a moment.

"Not cured yet, eh? I'll tell you what you had

better do—get another model, and finish it at once. There can be but little to do, I think."

Paul took his friend's advice this time, and was again pestered with models.

Three days passed, and among the host of applicants who had presented themselves not one suited him.

On the fourth, just as he had placed another picture on his easel, and begun to touch it in a listless, aimless kind of way—so different from his usual manner—the same gentle knock came at his door that he had heard on the previous occasion. There was the same figure—the same veiled face—the same noiseless footstep as she entered the room. The same hand was extended from the drapery, and the same ring that he had placed upon Angelica's gloved on the slender finger.

Paul's limbs trembled beneath him, and it was in vain that he essayed to speak.

The blood rushed to his temples, and, dropping on his knees, he pressed the jewelled hand again and again to his lips.

Slowly she raised the veil from her face; the coarse drapery of her attire fell back from the marble arm, displaying in all its ravishing beauty. There sat Angelica.

Paul murmured her name.

"Paul—dear Paul!" was the response.

One moment more and she was in his arms—then, covered with blushes, she shrunk back in the chair, abashed at her conduct.

"Angelica, dearest Angelica," and Paul raised kisses upon those beautiful hands, "look at me once, if only for once."

She turned her dewy eyes upon him for a moment, and then hid her face in his bosom.

"Paul," said she, in a sweet fond tone of voice, after countless vows had been exchanged, and sealed by as many caresses—"do you think me very bold to come here in this disguise?"

"Tell me all about it, dearest."

"Do you remember the day of the carnival, Paul? It was then I first saw you. Since then I have seen you very often," and as she raised her eyes to his, for a moment, she blushed deeper than before. "I heard through a poor girl, who sometimes sits as a model," faltered Angelica, "that you were in want of a hand to paint a hand from; so I borrowed her shawl, and attired myself as you now see me; and—ah—you know the rest, dear Paul."

"But the ring?" said Paul.

"Some other time, dearest," and Angelica grew very rosy. "How am I to know that you love me, Paul?" she asked, suddenly, looking up roguishly into his face, "have you nothing to prove it by but those kisses?"

Paul drew from his pocket the box containing the precious rose, and showed it to her.

"Ah, my poor rose!" she said; "give it to me, Paul, won't you, please?"

"I can't spare it," said Paul. And, closing the lid, he restored the box to his pocket.

"Paul, dear, how much your picture looks like me; have you not noticed it?"

He had noticed it. It was his ideal of beauty, and he told her so.

"I must go now, Paul, and you have not touched a brush. I wish to say one thing, may I?"

Paul answered by a kiss.

"You must place your picture in the large gallery in the eastern end of the Pantheon. My father visits there daily, so passionately fond is he of paintings."

To this Paul agreed, on condition that she would give him one more sitting, which she consented to do.

Paul worked as if inspired, and the picture was soon completed. Although his heart was set at rest upon one subject, that of his affection for Angelica, yet the thought of the wide difference between them in position caused him many an anxious thought.

Occasionally they met; and many were the tokens of her love that he received.

Eugene knew nothing of all this, and wondered greatly at the change in his young friend.

In the meantime the picture was hung in the gallery, and the count had seen it. His admiration knew no bounds—he declared it to be the finest production of the age, and was struck by the likeness it bore to his beloved daughter.

"Angelica, have you seen it?" he said, one morning, as they were strolling through the gallery.

"What, father?"

"The picture," answered the count. "Is it possible you have not seen it? It is your image, Angelica!"

He led her to the place it occupied.

"There," said he, "is a picture I mean to possess—and were the painter of it young and handsome he would deserve to possess the original—and he should too!"

"Do you mean that?" said Angelica, looking at him archly.

"I do," returned the count, who was famous for

his patronage of art; "subject, of course, to your own consent."

"Remember, then," said Angelica, playfully, "that should the painter be young and handsome—he must be both, or I won't have him!—he is to be my husband, provided I like him, and I am not indifferent to him. And as an earnest of your good faith, this ring upon my finger will be the sign of my willingness."

"Enough," said the count, smiling. "I am beginning to think you mean it, Angelica."

"Remember!" said Angelica, shaking her finger at him.

The next day Paul was summoned to the presence of the count.

Paul saluted him.

"Young man," said the count, "you are, I believe, the author of the painting which adorns the gallery in the Pantheon?"

Paul bowed.

"It is fortunate Angelica is not here," muttered the count. "I wish to become the purchaser of it," continued he, aloud. "Please name the price of it."

Paul advanced, and kneeling, presented the ring.

The count took it mechanically, looked at it, and started suddenly from his seat.

"Where did you obtain this?" he demanded, glaring Paul suspiciously.

"Father!" said the voice of Angelica, as she came in like a sunbeam into the dimly-lighted hall, and knelt at his feet. "Father, remember your promise."

"Arise, Angelica," said the count, raising her gently in his arms. "I will remember it—never have I yet broken a promise."

It was a feast-day. There were to be chariot-racing, wrestling-matches and a wedding. The count's daughter was to be married to Paul St. Jeust the artist. Every mouth was whispering it. All were discussing Angelica's beauty and praising Paul for his frankness and generosity as well as his good looks.

In the evening the spacious grounds of the mansion were one blaze of light, which fell on jewelled forms, and was reflected back again from diamond and ruby till the eye ached with the splendour of it.

Soft, voluptuous music stole gently on the ear, and the honeyed voices of bright-eyed women hushed the soul to sleep with luxury of sound.

Then all was stilled as if by magic—and the solemn voice of the cardinal murmured the words that bound two hearts in one. Then friendly hands were pressed and friendly wishes spoken.

"Ah, Paul," said Eugene; and the old man's face shivered up with a smile, his gray eyes sparkling with pleasure. "Joy, my dear boy—joy to you both!"

"Angelica, my precious wife," said Paul, after they had been married several weeks, "you never told me how you came to lose the ring."

"Cannot you guess, dear Paul, after knowing its history?" said Angelica, looking roguishly up into his eyes.

"I think I may," responded the artist; and, stooping, he imprinted a kiss upon the lovely hand.

G. E. J.

The construction of the great Chinese Wall only occupied ten years, but during that time millions of men were employed upon it. This wall is 1,500 miles long, from 20 to 25 feet high, and so thick that six horsemen can ride upon it abreast. It is in many parts built in the most substantial manner, especially at the eastern extremity, where it extends by a massive levee into the sea. In this portion, it is said, the workmen were required, on pain of death, to fit the stones so exactly that a nail could not be driven between them. In some parts the wall is of earth only. This wall does not surround the empire, but is built on its north and north-east boundary. It was built to keep out the Tartars. Subsequently, by the accession to the throne of an emperor of Tartar descent, the wall became useless. It is now, in many places, a ruin. It has been said that the materials used in building this would construct a wall six feet high and two feet thick twice around the world.

HABITS OF INSECTS.—Many insects prove that their parental instinct is strongly developed by taking care of their young after they are hatched—of this kind are several solitary insects, and those which live in societies, as bees, ants, some wasps, etc. The mason wasp buries a living caterpillar with its egg, but does not leave it take its chance; after the maggot is hatched and has devoured the first caterpillar, the wasp returns, opens the hole, pushes in another, and again closes the hole, and this is repeated till the young animal is able to get his own living. The field bug has a family of thirty

or forty young ones, which she conducts about as a hen does her chickens, beating her wings rapidly at any attempt to disturb them. If you disturb a nest of ants by digging, you will perceive the inhabitants much less intently occupied with providing for their own safety than in conveying of certain little white bodies to a place of security; these are the young, and to effect this purpose the whole community are in motion and no danger can divert them from attempting its accomplishment. A cruel observer having cut an ant in two, under these circumstances, the mutilated animal did not relax its affectionate exertions; with that half of the body to which the head was attached, it continued before existing to carry off tea of these white masses into the interior of the nest. Insects seem to live especially for the nutrition of their young. When we consider the exertions of these little animals, apparently so disproportionate to their size, and the constant labour in which they are occupied, one might be apt to think that the pleasures of their existence were outweighed by its pains. But what strikes us as wearisome toil, is probably their delightful occupation, and, like human parrots, they are never so happy as when actively engaged in advancing the interest of their young.

FACTS.

BOARD WAGES.—Directors' fees.—Fun. saw and WHEN a man is ready to go where duty calls, he should go home, if nothing more serious offers.

WATER CALAMITY!—We cannot wonder at foreigners decrying our naval strength when our own seamen run our best vessels down.—Fun.

The heaviest snorer we have heard of is the man whose wife woke him up the other night, during a tempest, saying she did wish he would stop snoring, for she wanted to hear the thunder.

A LAZY fellow falling a distance of fifty feet, and escaping with only a few scratches, a bystander remarked that he was "too slow to fall fast enough to hurt himself."

The son of a clergyman was delivering a college valedictory, when in pulling out his handkerchief he pulled out a pack of cards. "Hulloa," he exclaimed, "I've got on my father's coat."

A GENTLE REBUKE.

FATHER NATURE: "I say, shiver my timbers!—come, look here, this lubberly business won't do; and Britannia pretending to rule the waves, too!"—Fun.

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY.—"Ah, well, Mrs. Jenkins, them as live the longest ones most; but as I often says to my old man, says I, a kind word's an easy obligation, and goes a grand deal further than a whistled boot, or a quart pot, says I."—Fun.

A LITTLE DIALOGUE AT THE C. & C. STORES.—"Australian beef has gone up, but our fat is cheap. I'm sorry to see, Mrs. Brown, that our fat is cheap."

"Alas! my dear Mrs. Smith, it is not fat, it is fat."

"With us it has never gone down!"—Punch. A LADY who loved Bulwer entered a bookshop; just as one of the shopmen had killed a large rat. "I wish to see 'What will he do with it?'" she said; to a boy behind the counter. "Well," said the boy, "if you'll stop to the window, you will probably see him sling it into the back yard."

A NEW DEFINITION.—The first month of married life is called the honeymoon, because honey is shipped in by the bees, and the other B's (the bride and bridegroom) generally find the sweets of matrimony insipid. The mooning part of the business, anyone who has been a B can easily comprehend.—Fun.

THERE is one man at Cape May who is speedily getting rich, and he is a purveyor of mosquito-nets. The latest invention is a portable "neck protection" which goes over the head of the pretty women from Philadelphia, and has a sliding door in the front of it, to accommodate those who always kiss good bye when the train leaves.

PATERSON, the comedian, lent a brother actor two shillings, and when he made a demand for the sum the debtor, turning peevishly from him, said: "Hang it, I'll pay you off to-day in some shape or other." PATERSON good humouredly replied, "I shall be much obliged to you, Tom, to let it be as like two shillings as you can."

A CHEMICAL ERROR.

Resting over night at a pretentious hotel, and breakfasting very heartily in the morning, was an aged stranger, whose unspcakably sooty attire, while it had been unnoticed in the dark hours of his arrival, excited the dire distrust of the officials of the house, as revealed by light. Sorely suspicious was the superb clerk of the establishment that the latter was to be wronged of its dues by some trick or pica of this venerable shabby guest. When the latter, having despatched his meal, presented himself at the desk with an admonitory cough, his doubts became a certainty.

"I have had my breakfast," began the aged man, deliberately, "and candour compels me to say—"

"Hand over the money, you old rascal!" interrupted the clerk, in a rage.

"As I was saying," resumed the stranger, placidly, "candour compels me to inform you—"

"Call a policeman," roared the clerk, to a bell-boy. "We'll have our twelve shillings, or you go to the lock-up!"

The boy started on his errand without apparent notice from him of the seedy costume, who, taking his own time to draw forth, from some obscure pocket, a vast and greasy wallet, quietly repeated:

"As I was saying—I have had my breakfast—here's your twelve shillings; but candour compels me to inform you that those mashed potatoes was lovely—perfectly lovely, sir—and I don't mind throwing in a shilling extra for 'em."

THE "FLAG OF FREEDOM."

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY: "A runaway slave, John! You'll have to give him up, you know! See our circular of 31st of July."

JOHN BULL: "Give 'im up, yer honour! As well ord-me to haul down that there flag at once, sir!—Punch."

DUCKS AND BRAKE.—Mark Twain's frog story has been outdone by a Nottingham collier named Dore. This estimable gentleman, having two live ducks, wagered that they weighed eight pounds. When tried in the balance they were found wanting; whereupon he gave the voracious animals some old nails and a few crowbars, which brought them over-weight, and Dore won his wager. His success was, however, somewhat qualified by a fine of three guineas levied by the magistrate.—Fun.

"TO EVEN MONEY"

TERTIOTAL WIFE: "Ah, when that 'ev'ingly Sir Wilfrid 'as 'is way, 'e'll put that nasty beer down!"

IRREVERENT BRUTE: "Hope he'll put it down to the price it used to be—thruppence a pot!"—Fun.

BY JOVE!

FIRST SWELL: "By Jove, Fwed, how awfully we did 'ousw'y the women of the present day dress!"

SECOND DETTO: "Y'a-as, by Jove!"—Fun.

ON THE SURFACE.—There are people who fancy that Boyton bites his toe-nails with vexation because Webb has crossed the Channel. What nonsense! The American's dress accomplished its mission when it floated a public company.—Fun.

A WAIT FROM THE SOLVENT.—It is stated that the jury in the "Alberta-Mistletoe" case were discharged without giving a verdict because "they were unable to agree as to what form the rider should take." It should have taken the form of a Royal yacht, and then it would have ridden over every obstacle.—Fun.

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR.—Flirtation.—Fun.

A MAN who married a widow has invented a device to cure her of "eternally" praising her former husband. Whenever she begins to descant on his noble qualities this ingenious No. 2 merely says: "Poor dear man! How I wish he had not died!"

A BLIND man had been sitting one day and pleasantly chatting with some visitors for an hour, when one of them wished the company good morning, and left the room. "What white teeth that lady has," said the sarcastic blind man. "How can you possibly tell that?" said a friend. "Because," was the ready answer, "for the last half-hour she has done nothing but laugh."

DARWIN acknowledge himself sold when his little niece asked him, seriously, what a cat has that no other animal has, and he gave it up after mature deliberation, and then the sly little puss answered, "Kittens!"

PINS AND NEEDLES.

Why is a lunatic like an empty house?—Because there is a vacant stair.

What does a bird like the best?—A fly.

What class of people lie the most?—Sluggards.

Difficult operation for dentists—Stopping the teeth of the wind.—Judy.

MEME.

Where ladies are never found—In advance of their age.

Sabbatarian music—Hat-bands.

The cheapest fish to give—Pla(Oce).

Drawing it mild—paludose dentistry.

Pretty button-holes for City men—Stocks.

"Time is money," as the youth said on the fifth occasion of his breaking the main-spring of his watch.

A barrel-organ.—The "Brewers' Journal."

Favourite jewellery of horse fanciers—Studs.

The phantom ship—The ship that's always coming home.

Home influence—Spirit rapping.

I should like to know you well, the dog said to the bone.

A question for young bees learning their letters—Y R U A B ?

Why are the feet of a lion like cannon balls?—Because they are the four-runners of death.

Cheap cooking.—Warning the cockles of our heart.—Judy.

EMPATHY.

PLAIN-FEATURED party, who is a strong advocate for cremation, begs his friend will see that his remains are submitted to that process, in case of his sudden death.

HIS FRIEND: "All right, old man. But—hadn't you better wait till the fifth of November?"—Punch.

PREPARATION!

PARSON'S DAUGHTER (to the squire's keeper): "What are you doing with the pheasants, Muggles?"

KEEPER: "Well, miss, there's a lot o' City gents a comin' down with master to shoot on the flat, so I'm takin' a few o' their flight feathers out!"—Punch.

WHAT'S IN A NOMEN?—The gentleman who fell asleep the other day while reading the Foreign Intelligence, woke up again with a vague idea that the Skapiachian of Krugoprata, attired in a Pjerisje Prjepolje, had been struggling with Abdurachman Autoladskil for the throne of Herzegovina and Khand on the neutral territory of his stomach.—Fun.

THE SILKWORM AND HIS CRITIC.

An idle worm whose home is found
(And hence his name) within the ground,
Where, hidden from the cheerful day,
He eats and sleeps his life away—
One summer eve came crawling out,
And, gazing lazily about,
To see what he might chance to see,
He spied upon a mulberry tree
A silkworm, who, with patient skill
Was spinning, spinning, spinning still
The tiny thread from which is made
The finest satin and brocade
And many a charming web beside.
"Fool that you are!" the earthworm cried;
"With never-ending toil to spin
Your life away, and all to win,
By working like a galley-slave,
A weary life—an early grave;
Pray what but ensure do you gain
For making silly women vain?
Cease, cease your toil, unhappy worm!
Nor squander thus life's fleeting term;
Learn the high art yourself to please
And live—like me—in perfect ease!"
To him the Silkworm thus replied:
"I do not deem your counsel wise;
Come when it may, my death assures
More honour than a life like yours;
Consumed in luxury and sloth;
(And death is common to us both)
For while I labour to prepare
The threads designed to please the fair,
Methinks I listen to the praise
Of happy maids on bridal days;
The castle of each silken dress
Goes like a voice the name to bless
Of one who wisely understood
The luxury of doing good:
A god-like pleasure never known
To him who serves himself alone!"

J. G. S.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GERMAN TOAST.—To one egg, beaten well, add one cup of sweet milk or cream; season with a little salt and pepper. Cut stale bread in slices, dip in the milk to moisten, and fry in butter on a griddle. This is a nice dish for breakfast.

LIGHT PUDDING.—Put two tablespoonfuls of sago, tapioca, or rice in a pie dish, pour over a pint or a pint and a half of milk; add one and a half tablespoonfuls of sugar, and a little grated nutmeg, if liked; bake two hours in a slow oven; if rice is used, bake three hours.

PINE-APPLE JAM.—Pine-apple jam or preserve is easily made by boiling gently one pound of fruit, properly cut up, with a quarter of a pint of water and half a pound of sugar, until the whole becomes nearly transparent. The same proportions are required for smaller or larger quantities.

BREAKFAST CAKE.—Put into a quart of flour four ounces of butter, and if you use new milk put in three large spoonfuls of yeast; make it into biscuits and prick them with a fork. If you have sour

milk, omit the yeast, and put a teaspoonful of pearl-ash in the sour milk; pour it while effervescing into the flour. These biscuits are less likely to injure the teeth than if raised with yeast.

BUTTERMILK.—Persons who have not been in the habit of drinking buttermilk consider it disagreeable, because it is slightly acid; in consequence of the pressure of lactic acid. There is not much nourishment in buttermilk, but the presence of the lactic acid assists the digestion of any food taken with it. The Welsh peasants almost live upon oat-cake and buttermilk. Invalids suffering from indigestion will do well to drink buttermilk at meal times.

GEMS.

UNSTAINED thoughts do seldom dream of evil.
It is better to need relief than to want heart to give it.

BEAUTY in woman is like the flower in spring; but virtue is like the stars of Heaven.

HE who violates a pledge to which he has written his name, strikes down his honour with his own hand.

WHEN we are alone we have our thought to watch; in our families, our tempers; in society, our tongues.

PRaise, when the reasons for it are given, is double praise; censure, without the reasons for it, is only half censure.

SOCIETY is the atmosphere of souls, and we necessarily inhale from it something either healthful or infectious.

I HOLD it to be a fact, says Pascal, that if all persons knew what they said of each other, there would not be four friends in the world.

STATISTICS.

NAVAL PRIZE MONEY.—A according to Parliamentary return issued, showing the receipt and expenditure of naval prize bounty, salvage, and other moneys between 1st of April, 1874, and the 31st of March last, there was of slave and tonnage bounty, on the first-mentioned day, 13,699l. 11d. 3d. to be distributed; and in the year 3,566l. 6s. 10d. was paid into the naval prize account, making a total of 23,649l. 2s. 1d. Of that sum 12,599l. 3s. 3d. was distributed; and on the 1st of April the balance was 11,049l. 18s. 10d. The accounts of the naval prize bounty, &c., show receipts to 68,712l. 17s. 5d., and the balance at the end of the year was 51,674l. 17s. 10d., numerous balance sums remaining unclaimed; and of that balance 26,000l. had been transferred to the consolidated fund, under Section 17 of the Act 27 and 28 Vic., c. 24.

THE FRENCH MERCANTILE NAVY.—The French mercantile navy is now composed of 80 vessels of 800 tons and upwards, 70 from 600 to 700 tons, 124 of from 500 to 600; 253 of from 400 to 500, 322 of from 300 to 400; 674 of from 90 to 300, 1,373 of from 60 to 100, and 10,036 of 30 tons and less. The number of steamers included among these vessels amounts to 455, with an aggregate of 42,942 tons and 57,513 horse power, 100 of these steamers are 200 horse power and upwards, 89 of from 100 to 200, 97 of from 60 to 100, 83 of from 50 to 60, and 87 of 40 and less. The number of vessels annually entering and leaving the French ports amounts to 119,000, and their tonnage is estimated at more than 10,500,000. Of these vessels 91,000 trade between the ports of the Channel and the Atlantic, and 24,000 in the Mediterranean. The coast fishery employs 2,250 vessels, with a total tonnage of 71,850 tons, and manned by 40,609 fishermen.

MISCELLANEOUS.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.—The gentleman in those days wore, when he went out, a wig, white stock, white satin embroidered waistcoat, black satin small-clothes, with white silk stockings, and fine broad-cloth or velvet coat. At home, instead of his wig, he had on a velvet cap, and sometimes a fine linen one under it; and his coat gave place to a gown, frequently of coloured damask lined with silk, while fancy-coloured leather slippers covered his feet. A gentleman's snuff-box was as indispensable as the cigar is now, and courtesy was shown in taking the wood in this form with a friend. Ladies wore those elegant silk and brocade dresses which are still so much admired, and their hair, dressed with powder and pomatum, was elevated much higher above their heads than the most soaring and ambitious locks of their fair descendants of to-day. The clergy wore wigs, gowns, and bands in the pulpit, and the cocked hats which they wore in the street distinguished them from their brethren of to-day.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

BELLA.—Indulging habitually in large quantities of strong tea will bring on nervous debility.

A. X. E.—Ladies who wish to be thin should not eat sugar or any kind of stimulants. They should also be temperate and of active habits.

STOCK-ONIAN.—The ringing noises in your head are warnings of the approach of deafness. Consult an experienced and respectable aurist at once.

A SOLDIER'S WIFE.—You have no remedy but an appeal to your husband's parish for relief. The army does not take the wife with the recruit.

L. B.—In point of years there is no disparity between your lover, who is twenty-eight, and you, who are nineteen. Those are just the ages at which husband and wife can auspiciously begin the journey of life together.

C. P.—Cold baths are invigorating, but not suitable to every constitution. Persons affected with chest disease or having a tendency to apoplexy should avoid them.

J. R. T.—Sunday is the first day of the week. It was the day of worship of the sun by the ancient Teutons and Celts, and was early adopted as the Christian day of prayer.

FLORENCE wishes to know "how she is to act if a young gentleman is very attentive to her and she afterwards finds out that he is engaged to another?" She had better give him his dismissal in the most summary manner possible.

PAUL PAT.—Either the young lady is unworthy of you or you have been deceived by a false friend. It is a duty you owe to yourself to bring matters to a crisis by openly demanding an explanation, through the interposition of your oldest and nearest male relative.

B. G.—Prosperity has its "sweet uses" as well as adversity, for no sooner does a man come into a little property than he instantly learns the number of his friends, whereas, if he remained poor the chances are that he would have died in perfect ignorance of the fact.

HARRY.—"Pere de Chaise" is the name of the public cemetery of Paris, and was laid out in 1804; formerly it was the chief seat of the Jesuits' establishment in France, and was presided over by Pere la Chaise, confessor to Louis XIV., and from him took its name.

LAURA would like to know "what she is to do if a young gentleman gives her presents and then takes no notice of her, and when she writes to know the cause leaves her letter unanswered?" She may conclude that he is a fickle man, who has altered his mind, and she had better strive to disengage him from her thoughts.

CONSTANCE.—It is not only a breach of etiquette of courtship but unmanly and indecorous of an engaged young gentleman to correspond with other young ladies, other than relatives, or to be seen frequently in public with them. An engaged bachelor has voluntarily resigned all the special privileges he enjoyed when wandering through society like another Colet.

WINNIE will do well to consult with her brother as to the reason of his coolness to her "best," and if he has any just grounds for such treatment towards him he will then explain the same to his sister, whose welfare he ought to establish. Winnie will also be able to see how far the young gentleman cares for her by his attentions to her and answers to her brother.

ZIONA.—The etiquette and law of courtship is that a girl can honourably reject a lover to whom she had not given a promise of marriage. But a woman who abuses her sex's privilege of making an election and plays with a man as a cat does with a mouse weakens her rectitude and provokes a punishment that society in its foolish mercy calls severe.

KATE H.—The young lady had much better accept the offer of the young gentleman who is so fond of her than wait to see if the other, who at present cares nothing about her, will ever experience the effect of her charms. We do not undertake to answer theological questions, nor can we advise in the other case mentioned in your letter, except to say that an elopement is in nearly all instances a very bad proceeding.

S. B.—In the first place, a young lady ought not to accept the portrait of a gentleman or any other present unless they be engaged. But if she has done so she ought not to present her portrait in return. If the gentleman's attentions have since diminished towards her it is all the greater reason to suppose that he had no serious intention at the time he gave his portrait, and it would perhaps be as well for her to think of the best means of returning it.

LIZZIE.—For wounds of the heart old Father Time is the best surgeon. When once they have closed he never opens them again, except to punish the foolish or guilty. He is the only competent person to take charge of love-sick girls who have strangely forgotten the respect they

owe to themselves and families. The only advice we can give in such a case is a speedy marriage, coupled with an honourable resolution to let the fevered dream of a spoiled youth or neglected education disappear before the glow of sound and buoyant moral health.

HARRY wants to know what he shall do to make himself more agreeable to the ladies, as it is the height of his ambition to be a "ladies' man." Every gentleman should certainly be as polite and obliging to his lady friends as possible; but we can't say that we think your ambition a very laudable one. Let us just whisper in your ear that the so-called "ladies' men" are seldom popular with women possessing any brains, and that, with the well-known perversity of their sex, ladies generally prefer the gentlemen opposite to the kind which you are so desirous of copying. Just relinquish this ambition of yours.

GERTIE is in very great trouble. The gentleman to whom she is engaged being out of town one evening she accepted another gentleman's escort to a concert, unaware of the fact that the two gentlemen very much disliked each other. Now her betrothed persists in disbelieving her ignorance of their feelings for each other, and Gertie does not know what to do. Rather unfortunate, but if you have told the gentleman that you erred through ignorance and he isn't inclined to believe you, why let him sink over it till he comes to his senses, which will doubtless be soon.

CHANNING begs us to give him some advice on the following subjects: 1st. Is it necessary for a young man to take his hat off when he meets a young lady acquaintance? 2nd. If a gentleman, while calling at a friend's house in the evening, meets a young lady there, is he obliged to escort her home? 3. What kind of a ring is most suitable for an engagement ring?—1. Not necessary, perhaps, it is entirely at the option of the gentleman, yet it is an act of politeness and courtesy which no gentleman will habitually neglect. 2. No, you are not obliged to do so, though it would be polite in you to offer your services. 3. A plain gold band is very appropriate, unless you are wealthy, in which case a diamond might be preferable.

HOLD YOUR HEAD UP LIKE A MAN.

If the stormy winds should rustle
While you tread the world's highway,
Still against them bravely tussle,
Hope and labour day by day;
Falter not, no matter whether
There is sunshine, storm or calm,
And in every kind of weather
Hold your head up like a man.

If a brother should deceive you
And should act a traitor's part,
Never let his treason grieve you,
Jog along with lightsome heart.
Fortune seldom follows fawning,
Boldness is the better plan,
Hoping for a better dawning
Hold your head up like a man.

Earth, though e'er so rich and mellow,
Yields not for the worthless dross,
But the bold and honest fellow
He can shift and stand alone.
Spurn the knave of every nation,
Always do the best you can,
And no matter what your station
Hold your head up like a man.

W.

DEMONIAK asks us for a receipt to cure a bad temper. What a question to put to a too-confiding and over-worked editor! The Falls of Niagara, no doubt, would extinguish Vesuvius, but how are they to be brought together? In like manner a bad temper may be drowned in the waters of good humour, but how is the thing to be done? It cannot, and that's our answer. Our opinion of bad temper, however, is by no means hostile. We look upon it as a condition beyond our control and treat it just as we do bad weather—we do not make it, and therefore cannot mend it. If the human sky was always serene and cloudless we should tire and complain of its monotony and be as thankful for an occasional breeze as the sailor was for the bit of fog that hid about the everlasting blue of a Neapolitan sky. He exclaimed, "Here's something like weather!" and we say of bad temper, "Here's a human nature and make the best of it!"

G. H., a sailor, twenty-eight, 5ft. 6in., fair, wishes to correspond with a young woman between twenty and twenty-three; a Kent girl preferred.

ROYAL YARD, seaman in the Royal Navy, twenty-one, wishes to correspond with a young lady; a London girl preferred.

GERTY, nineteen, tall, and considered good looking, would like to correspond with a young man about thirty, who must be steady and temperate; Gerty has managed her father's house for several years.

J. M. C., twenty-one, medium height, dark complexion, wishes to correspond with a young lady, good-looking and fond of home, with a view to matrimony.

W. H. T., a clerk and book keeper, twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., wishes to correspond with a young lady about nineteen or twenty, who has a taste for music.

ELLA, sixteen, fair complexion, blue eyes, light brown hair, and with good prospects, would like to correspond with a rather dark young man, who must be the same age as herself.

LOVING LOOT, nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, and very cheerful, would like to correspond with a young man about twenty, dark, rather tall, and of a loving disposition.

MAGGIE and **ANNIE**, two sisters, wish to correspond with two gentleman friends. Maggie is twenty, medium height, auburn hair and brown eyes; Annie is tall, fair hair and blue eyes. Both of them are considered good looking.

MARY and **SARAH** wish to correspond with two young men with a view to matrimony. Mary is fair, with dark hair, blue eyes, and fond of home; Sarah is twenty, has dark eyes and hair. Both are medium height, and would make good wives.

WILLIAM, a dentist's assistant, in receipt of St. 10s. per week, would like to correspond with a pretty young

ady, who has money, with a view to matrimony, as he is very lonely.

LIONEL, twenty-four, tall, brown hair and blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young lady, about nineteen, good looking, and who has a small income, with a view to matrimony; Lionel has good looks.

R. W. G., a steady mechanic, medium height, and earning good wages, wishes to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony.

FERNIE FOWKE, M. C. O., in the Royal Marine Artillery, wishes to correspond with a young lady about eighteen or twenty, who must be loving and good tempered.

FLORENCE and **ROSE**, two friends, wish to correspond with two steady young men, with a view to matrimony. Florence is twenty-one, dark hair and eyes, domesticated, would make a good wife, and would prefer a seafaring man; Rose is twenty-three, fair, golden hair and blue eyes, and would make a loving wife.

MARGARET K., twenty-eight, dark, rather short and very good tempered, wishes to correspond with a steady working man about thirty-four, good tempered and fond of home.

R. J. N., a seaman in the Royal Navy, wishes to correspond with a young lady, who must have a good income and make a good wife.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

FRANK is responded to by—S. C. A., who think he will suit her.

S. S. by—B. A., twenty-one, dark, good looking, possessed of musical and elocutional abilities, and by profession a clerk.

ROSS and **LILY** by—Frederick and Charles. Frederick is twenty, tall and good looking, and would prefer Rose; Charles is twenty, medium height, fair and good looking, and would prefer Lily. Both of good families and in good positions.

CHARLES by—Edith, eighteen, medium height, fond of home, and would make a loving wife.

T. P. by—S. A. B., twenty-four, medium height, very passable in appearance, respectfully connected, and wishes to go abroad.

VIOLIER by—Union Jack, twenty, 5ft. 5in., fair complexion, brown hair, considered good looking, of a loving disposition, fond of home, and with good prospects in view.

G. E. M. by—Bessy, seventeen, very pretty and jolly, and well educated.

HORACE by—Merry Low, 5ft. 6in., fond of home and music, of a cheerful disposition, and thinks she is all that he requires.

MAUDE L. by—T. E. B., twenty, medium height, fair, and thinks he will suit her.

ETHEL M. by—W. G. H., twenty, tall, fair, and thinks she will be all he requires; by—True Blue, twenty, 5ft. 5in., rather light complexion, dark brown eyes, well to do, considered nice looking, and thinks she would be just what he is looking for; and by—Nugget, light hair, fair complexion, good looking, with a salary of 300s. a year and expectations.

RAILWAY UMBEL by—Alice, tall and dark, with light blue eyes, considered nice looking, well domesticated, fond of music, would make a loving wife and thinks she is all he requires.

L. V. by—Cheerful Maggie, who is passable in looks, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home, and of a cheerful disposition.

ANNIE by—W. H. T., twenty-two, 5ft. 5in., a conductor of music, but by trade a book keeper, and thinks he would suit her.

ALBERT by—Emmie, twenty-two, medium height, considered pretty, and would try to make him happy; and by—"Brightly Breaks the Morning" eighteen, medium height, blue eyes, brown curly hair, fair complexion, is a good cook and experienced housekeeper, very clever with her needle and her own dressmaker, most respectably connected, and has fair prospects, and is considered nice looking, of a cheerful and loving disposition, and thinks she could make Albert happy.

EMMETT by—Millie L., eighteen, fair complexion, blue gray eyes, dark hair, considered pretty, very lovable disposition, fond of home and domesticated, has no money at present, but with good prospects, and most respectably connected.

VIOLIER by—William H., twenty-one, blue eyes, brown hair, a good musician and clerk, and very fond of home.

JAMES by—Charlotte M., nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of home, and thinks she would suit him.

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